This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Edinburgh, 1st July, 1837.

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

VOLUME FIRST APPEARED ON 18TH MARCH.
VOLUME SECOND ON 1ST MAY.
VOLUME THIRD ON 1ST JUNE.
VOLUME FOURTH THIS DAY (1ST JULY).

VOLUME FIFTH
Is unavoidably postponed to 1st October.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S WORKS
COMPLETE.

I. WAVERLEY NOVELS, 48 VOLS. SMALL OCTAVO, 96 ENGRAVINGS.
II. POETICAL WORKS, 12 VOLS. SMALL OCTAVO, 24 ENGRAVINGS.
III. PROSE WORKS, 28 VOLS. SMALL OCTAVO, 56 ENGRAVINGS.

All done up in Cloth Boards, very handsomely, with gilt Back Titles.

IV. SELECT POETRY, 6 VOLS. SMALL OCTAVO.
THE SAME, 6 VOLS. 24MO, POCKET EDITION.
V. BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS, 4 VOLS. SMALL OCTAVO.
VI. LIFE OF NAPOLEON, 9 VOLS. SMALL OCTAVO.
VII. PERIODICAL CRITICISM, 5 VOLS. SMALL OCTAVO.
VIII. TALES OF A GRANDFATHER (SCOTLAND), 5 VOLS. SMALL OCTAVO.

All likewise done up in Cloth Boards, very handsomely, with gilt Back Titles.

SEPARATE.

IX. THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL—MARMION—LADY OF THE LAKE—ROKEBY—LORD OF THE ISLES, SMALL OCTAVO OR 24MO.
TRIERMAIN AND OTHER POEMS, 24MO (ONLY).

All done up in Cloth, Silk, Roan, or Morocco.

X. HISTORY OF SCOTLAND (TALES OF A GRANDFATHER), SCHOOL COPY, 2 THICK VOLS. WITH COLOURED MAPS, BOUND.

PUBLISHED BY ROBERT CADELL.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S HISTORY OF SCOTLAND,

CONTAINED IN

TALES OF A GRANDFATHER.

For the Use of Schools.

In Two Thick Vols. with a Coloured Map; 10s. Bound.

"These Tales were written in the interval of other avocations, for the use of the young relative to whom they are inscribed. They embrace at the same time some attempt at a general view of Scottish History, with a selection of its more picturesque and prominent points. Having been found useful to the young person for whom the compilation was made, they are now given to the public, in the hope that they may be a source of instruction for others. The compilation, though professing to be only a collection of Tales, or Narratives from the Scottish Chronicles, will nevertheless be found to contain a general view of the History of that country, from the period when it begins to possess general interest."—ABBOTSFORD, *Dec.* 1827.

CAPTAIN BASIL HALL'S WRITINGS.

I. SCHLOSS HAINFELD; OR, A WINTER IN LOWER STYRIA. 3d Edition.

"Captain Hall is one of our most popular, and deservedly popular writers; and *Schloss Hainfeld* is one of his happiest efforts:—no proof of his success can be greater than the regret we felt at finding it contained in one volume. We look forward to some other work from his pen:—so acute an observer and so eloquent a narrator cannot fail to charm and engage his readers."—*John Bull, 10th July.*

"A family picture and a family party; wrought up with one of those touching romances which belong to real life, and to real life alone.—We congratulate Captain Hall, equally on the good feeling and the spirit that he has shown."—*Literary Gazette, 18th June.*

"This is a very singular, entertaining, and interesting volume."—*Spectator, 25th June.*

II. FRAGMENTS OF VOYAGES AND TRAVELS. 1st SERIES. 3 Vols. 15s. 2d Edition.

III. FRAGMENTS OF VOYAGES AND TRAVELS. 2d SERIES. 3 Vols. 15s. 2d Edition.

IV. FRAGMENTS OF VOYAGES AND TRAVELS. 3d SERIES. 3 Vols. 15s. 2d Edition.

V. TRAVELS IN NORTH AMERICA. 3 Vols., L.1, 11s. 6d. 3d Edition. And Volume of Etchings in 4to, 10s. 6d.

STUART'S NORTH AMERICA. 3d Edition. 2 Vols. L.1, 1s.

MRS DALGAIRNS' COOKERY,

A NEW EDITION.

THE COOK'S ORACLE, A NEW EDITION,

Containing a Complete System of Cookery for Catholic Families.

NAPOLEON IN COUNCIL.

Being the Opinions of Napoleon delivered in the Council of State.

By BARON PELET (de la Lozere).

Translated by CAPTAIN BASIL HALL, R. N.

Assisted by the Author, who has contributed numerous Explanatory Notes.

"The translation from which we have (with an occasional correction) made our extracts is exceeding well done in point of style and idiom."—*Quart. Rev., April,* 1837.

"At first sight it seems not a little curious, that a work which contains so much that is characteristic, and in many respects quite new, respecting Napoleon, should not have excited attention in France, and accordingly that it should only be now, four years after date, that the book should be presented to us for acceptance. But on rising from its perusal, we readily discover the reason of this affected indifference of the French—for affected it must be—to a work so full of important and characteristic detail of their quondam sovereign. The truth is, it does *not* give a favourable impression of Bonaparte, though there is abundant internal evidence that the statements are strictly true, even without the assurance we have on this score from the high character of M. Pelet."—*Blackwood's Magazine, April,* 1837.

"Nothing which is calculated to throw light upon the conduct, character, or opinions of Bonaparte, can be otherwise regarded than as an important contribution to the history of the present times. The volume before us is peculiarly entitled to this distinction."—*Edinburgh Saturday Post.*

"This volume may be pronounced a valuable accession to the materials necessary to enable one fully to appreciate the character of Napoleon."—*Spectator.*

"We will venture to assert that this is one of the most authentic records of the man that have yet been given to the world, simply because a considerable portion of the work consists of despatches, letters, and documents of Napoleon himself."—*Edinburgh Observer, 24th March.*

"This volume has considerable claims on the public attention, as well on account of its own merits, as from the acknowledged competency both of the author and of the translator. Of Captain Basil Hall's ability for the task he has undertaken, it would be superfluous to speak. Much as has been written about Napoleon, we are quite sure that this volume will be perused by the English reader with an increase both of interest and information."—*Edinburgh Advertiser.*

"The gifted writer, who has acted in the present instance merely as a translator, has, indeed, conferred a real and important benefit on the English public, by putting M. Pelet's volume in an English dress; for while he has thus brought to light a good deal that is new to the people of this country, in the career, and especially as regards the opinions of the extraordinary man, whose life, conversations, and speeches, form the theme of the work, he has also enabled us to become familiar with, perhaps, the most accurate, full, and intelligible exhibition that ever has come under our notice of Napoleon's principles and genius, as a politician, or a member of civil society."—*Monthly Review, April.*

"Amidst the countless works on the sayings and doings of Napoleon, we question if there is one which throws so much light on his real character, or reveals so much of his sentiments, as the volume before us. Its value lies in the record of his opinions delivered in the Council of State, on all the various subjects discussed there. We wish Captain Hall would employ his leisure in translating a few more works of this description."—*Scotsman.*

"The work is extremely well translated by Captain Hall, and will, we have no doubt, be acceptably received by the public, as an authentic record of events, and of the opinions of one who may be said, at one time, to have commanded the destinies of the world, and whose name will ever be conspicuous in its history."—*Edinburgh Courant.*

To be had of

L. A. LEWIS, 15, POULTRY, LONDON.

TALES AND ROMANCES

OF THE

AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY AFTER QUENTIN DURWARD TO THE END,

WITH ALL THE NOTES AND NEW INTRODUCTIONS WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN THE NEW EDITION,

16 *Vols.* 18*mo* (*or Miniature Edition*).

THE SAME, 16 *Vols. Octavo.*

TALES AND ROMANCES AFTER WOODSTOCK TO THE END, 9 *Vols.* 18*mo.*

THE SAME, 11 *Vols.* 12*mo.*

THE SAME, 9 *Vols. Octavo.*

These Continuations will enable many to complete their Sets in the above Series.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO., PAUL'S WORK.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

MDCCCXXXVII.

ROBERT CADELL, EDINBURGH.

JOHN MURRAY AND WHITTAKER AND CO., LONDON.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME FOURTH.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

Publication of Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk—Guy Mannering "Terry-fied"—Death of Major John Scott—Letters to Thomas Scott—Publication of the Antiquary—History of 1814 for the Edinburgh Annual Register—Letters on the History of Scotland projected—Publication of the first Tales of my Landlord by Murray and Blackwood—Anecdotes by Mr Train—Quarterly Review on the Tales—Building at Abbotsford begun—Letters to Morritt, Terry, Murray, and the Ballantynes— 1816, 1

CHAPTER II.

Harold the Dauntless published—Scott aspires to be a Baron of the Exchequer—Letter to the Duke of Buccleuch concerning Poachers, &c.—First attack of Cramp in the Stomach—Letters to Morritt—Terry—and Mrs Maclean Clephane—Story of the Doom of Devorgoil—John Kemble's retirement from the Stage—William Laidlaw established at Kaeside—Novel of Rob Roy projected—Letter to Southey on the relief of the Poor, &c.—Letter to Lord Montagu on Hogg's Queen's Wake, and on the death of Frances Lady Douglas— 1817, 40

PAGE

CHAPTER III.

Excursion to the Lennox—Glasgow—and Drumlanrig—Purchase of Toftfield—Establishment of the Ferguson Family at Huntly Burn—Lines written in illness—Visits of Washington Irving—Lady Byron—and Sir David Wilkie—Progress of the Building at Abbotsford—Letters to Morritt—Terry, &c.—Conclusion of Rob Roy— 1817, 80

CHAPTER IV.

Rob Roy published—Negotiation concerning the Second Series of Tales of My Landlord—Commission to search for the Scottish Regalia—Letters to the Duke of Buccleuch—Mr Croker—Mr Morritt—Mr Murray—Mr Maturin, &c.—Correspondence on Rural Affairs with Mr Laidlaw—And on the Buildings at Abbotsford with Mr Terry—Death of Mrs Murray Keith and Mr George Bullock— 1818, 108

CHAPTER V.

May 1818,—Dinner at Mr Home Drummond's—Scott's Edinburgh Den—Details of his Domestic Life in Castle Street—His Sunday Dinners—His Evening Drives, &c.—His conduct in the General Society of Edinburgh—Dinners at John Ballantyne's Villa—and at James Ballantyne's in St John Street on the appearance of a New Novel—Anecdotes of the Ballantynes, and of Constable, 144

CHAPTER VI.

Publication of the Heart of Mid-Lothian—Its Reception in Edinburgh and in England—Abbotsford in October—Melrose Abbey—Dryburgh, &c.—Lion Hunters from America—Tragedy of the Cherokee Lovers—Scott's Dinner to the Selkirkshire Yeomen— 1818, 176

CHAPTER VII.

Declining Health of Charles Duke of Buccleuch—Letter on the Death of Queen Charlotte—Provincial Antiquities, &c.—Extensive Sale of Copyrights to Constable and Co.—Death of Mr Charles Carpenter—Scott receives and accepts the offer of a Baronetcy—He declines to renew his application for a Seat on the Exchequer Bench—Letters to Morritt—

PAGE
Richardson—Miss Baillie—The Duke of Buccleuch—Lord Montagu—Captain Adam Ferguson—Rob Roy played at Edinburgh—Letter from Jedediah Cleishbotham to Mr Charles Mackay— 1818—1819, 206

CHAPTER VIII.

Recurrence of Scott's Illness—Death of the Duke of Buccleuch—Letters to Captain Ferguson—Lord Montagu—Mr Southey—And Mr Shortreed—Scott's Sufferings while dictating the Bride of Lammermoor—Anecdotes by James Ballantyne, &c.—Appearance of the Third Series of Tales of My Landlord—Anecdote of the Earl of Buchan—March—June—1819— 231

CHAPTER IX.

Gradual Re-establishment of Scott's Health—Ivanhoe in Progress—His Son Walter joins the Eighteenth Regiment of Hussars—Scott's Correspondence with his Son—Miscellaneous Letters to Mrs Maclean Clephane—M. W. Hartstonge—J. G. Lockhart—John Ballantyne—John Richardson—Miss Edgeworth—Lord Montagu, &c.—Abbotsford Visited by Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg—Death of Mrs William Erskine— 1819, 279

CHAPTER X.

Political Alarms—The Radicals—Levies of Volunteers—Project of the Buccleuch Legion—Death of Scott's Mother—Her Brother Dr Rutherford—And her Sister Christian—Letters to Lord Montagu—Mr Thomas Scott—Cornet Scott—Mr Laidlaw—And Lady Louisa Stuart—Publication of Ivanhoe— 1819, 318

CHAPTER XI.

The Visionary—The Peel of Darnick—Scott's Saturday Excursions to Abbotsford—A Sunday there in February—Constable—John Ballantyne—Thomas Purdie, &c.—Prince Gustavus Vasa—Proclamation of King George IV.—Publication of the Monastery— 1820, 345

CHAPTER XII.

Scott Revisits London—His Portrait by Lawrence, and Bust

PAGE

by Chantrey—Anecdotes by Allan Cunningham—Letters to Mrs Scott—Laidlaw, &c.—His Baronetcy Gazetted—Marriage of his Daughter Sophia—Letter to "The Baron of Galashiels"—Visit of Prince Gustavus Vasa at Abbotsford—Tenders of Honorary Degrees from Oxford and Cambridge—Letter to Mr Thomas Scott— 1820, 360

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

CHAPTER I.

PUBLICATION OF PAUL'S LETTERS TO HIS KINSFOLK—GUY MANNERING "TERRY-FIED"—DEATH OF MAJOR JOHN SCOTT—LETTERS TO THOMAS SCOTT—PUBLICATION OF THE ANTIQUARY—HISTORY OF 1814 FOR THE EDINBURGH ANNUAL REGISTER—LETTERS ON THE HISTORY OF SCOTLAND PROJECTED—PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST TALES OF MY LANDLORD BY MURRAY AND BLACKWOOD—ANECDOTES BY MR TRAIN—QUARTERLY REVIEW ON THE TALES—BUILDING AT ABBOTSFORD BEGUN—LETTERS TO MORRITT, TERRY, MURRAY, AND THE BALLANTYNES.

1816.

The year 1815 may be considered as, for Scott's peaceful tenor of life, an eventful one. That which followed has left almost its only traces in the successive appearance of nine volumes, which attest the prodigal genius, and hardly less astonishing industry of the man. Early in January were published Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk, of which I need not now say more than that they were received with lively curiosity, and general, though not vociferous applause. The first edition was an octavo, of 6000 copies; and it was followed, in the course of the next two or three years, by a second and a third, amounting together to 3000 more. The popularity of the novelist was at its height; and this admitted, if not avowed, specimen of Scott's prose, must have been perceived, by all who had any share of discrimination, to flow from the same pen.

Mr Terry produced in the spring of 1816 a dramatic piece, entitled, "Guy Mannering," which met with great success on the London boards, and still continues to be a favourite with the theatrical public; what share the novelist himself had in this first specimen of what he used to call "the art of *Terryfying*," I cannot exactly say; but his correspondence shows that the pretty song of the *Lullaby*[*] was not his only contribution to it; and I infer that he had taken the trouble to modify the plot, and re-arrange, for stage purposes, a considerable part of the original dialogue. The casual risk of discovery, through the introduction of the song which had, in the mean time, been communicated to one of his humble dependents, the late Alexander Campbell, editor of Albyn's Anthology—(commonly known at Abbotsford as, by way of excellence, "*The Dunniewassail*,")—and Scott's suggestions on that difficulty, will amuse the reader of the following letter:—

To D. Terry, Esq. Alfred Place, Bloomsbury, London.

"Abbotsford, 18th April, 1816.

"My dear Terry,

"I give you joy of your promotion to the dignity of an householder, and heartily wish you all the success you so well deserve, to answer the approaching enlargement of your domestic establishment. You will find a house a very devouring monster, and that the purveying for it requires a little exertion, and a great deal of self-denial and arrangement. But when there is domestic peace and contentment, all that would otherwise be disagreeable, as restraining our taste and occupying our time, becomes easy. I trust Mrs Terry will get her business easily over, and that you will soon 'dandle Dickie on your knee.' I have been at the spring circuit, which made me late in receiving your letter, and there I was introduced to a man whom I never saw in my life before, namely, the proprietor of all the Pepper and Mustard family, in other words, the genuine Dandie Dinmont. Dandie is himself modest, and says, 'he b'lives its only the dougs that is in the buik, and no himsel.' As the surveyor of taxes was going his ominous rounds past Hyndlea, which is the abode of Dandie, his whole pack rushed out upon the man of execution, and Dandie followed them (conscious that their number greatly exceeded his return), exclaiming, 'the tae hauf o' them is but whalps, man.' In truth, I knew nothing of the man, except his odd humour of having only two names for twenty dogs. But there are lines of general resemblance among all these hill-men, which there is no missing; and Jamie Davidson of Hyndlea certainly looks Dandie Dinmont remarkably well. He is much flattered with the compliment, and goes uniformly by the name among his comrades, but has never read the book. Ailie used to read it to him, but it set him to sleep. All this you will think funny enough. I am afraid I am in a scrape about the song, and that of my own making; for as it never occurred to me that there was any thing odd in my writing two or three verses for you, which have no connexion with the novel, I was at no pains to disown them; and Campbell is just that sort of crazy creature, with whom there is no confidence, not from want of honour and disposition to oblige, but from his flighty temper. The music of *Cadil gŭ lo* is already printed in his publication, and nothing can be done with him, for fear of setting his tongue a-going. Erskine and you may consider whether you should barely acknowledge an obligation to an unknown friend, or pass the matter altogether in silence. In my opinion, my *first* idea was preferable to both, because I cannot see what earthly connexion there is between the song and the novel, or how acknowledging the one is fathering the other. On the contrary, it seems to me that acknowledgment tends to exclude the idea of farther obligation than to the extent specified. I forgot also that I had given a copy of the lines to Mrs Macleod of Macleod, from whom I had the air. But I remit the matter entirely to you and Erskine, for there must be many points in it which I cannot be supposed a good judge of. At any rate, don't let it delay your publication, and believe I shall be quite satisfied with what you think proper.

---

[*] See Scott's Poetical Works, (Edit. 1834), vol. xi., p. 317.

" I have got from my friend Glengarry the noblest dog ever seen on the Border since Johnnie Armstrong's time. He is between the wolf and deer greyhound, about six feet long from the tip of the nose to the tail, and high and strong in proportion : he is quite gentle, and a great favourite : tell Will. Erskine he will eat off his plate without being at the trouble to put a paw on the table or chair. I showed him to Matthews, who dined one day in Castle Street before I came here, where, except for Mrs S., I am like unto

> 'The spirit who dwelleth by himself,
> In the land of mist and snow '—

for it is snowing and hailing eternally, and will kill all the lambs to a certainty, unless it changes in a few hours. At any rate, it will cure us of the embarrassments arising from plenty and low markets. Much good luck to your dramatic exertions: when I can be of use, command me. Mrs Scott joins me in regards to Mrs Terry, and considers the house as the greatest possible bargain: the situation is all you can wish. Adieu! yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

" P. S.—On consideration, and comparing difficulties, I think I will settle with Campbell to take my name from the verses, as they stand in his collection. The verses themselves I cannot take away without imprudent explanations; and as they go to other music, and stand without any name, they will probably not be noticed, so you need give yourself no farther trouble on the score. I should like to see my copy: pray send it to the post-office, under cover to Mr Freeling, whose unlimited privilege is at my service on all occasions."

Early in May appeared the novel of "the Antiquary," which seems to have been begun a little before the close of 1815. It came out at a moment of domestic distress.

Throughout the year 1815 Major John Scott had been drooping. He died on the 8th of May, 1816; and I extract the letter in which this event was announced to Mr Thomas Scott by his only surviving brother.

To Thomas Scott, Esq. Paymaster of the 70th Regiment, Canada.

"Edinburgh, 15th May, 1816.

" My dear Tom,

" This brings you the melancholy news of our brother John's concluding his long and lingering illness by death, upon Thursday last. We had thought it impossible he should survive the winter, but, as the weather became milder, he gathered strength, and went out several times. In the beginning of the week he became worse, and on Wednesday kept his bed. On Thursday, about two o'clock, they sent me an express to Abbotsford—the man reached me at nine. I immediately set out, and travelled all night—but had not the satisfaction to see my brother alive. He had died about four o'clock, without much pain, being completely exhausted. You will naturally feel most anxious about my mother's state of health and spirits. I am happy to say, she has borne this severe shock with great firmness and resignation, is perfectly well in her health, and as strong in her mind as ever you knew her. She feels her loss, but is also sensible that protracted existence, with a constitution so irretrievably broken up, could have been no blessing. Indeed I must say, that, in many respects, her situation will be more comfortable on account of this removal, when the first shock is over; for to watch an invalid, and to undergo all the changes of a temper fretted by suffering, suited ill with her age and habits. The funeral, which took place yesterday, was decent and private, becoming our father's eldest son, and the head of a quiet family. After it, I asked Hay Donaldson and Mr MacCulloch * to look over his papers, in case there should be any testamentary provision, but none such was found; nor do I think he had any intention of altering the destination which divides his effects between his surviving brothers.

Your affectionate

W. S."

---

* The late Mr Hay Donaldson, W.S.—an intimate friend of both Thomas and Walter Scott, and Mr Macculloch of Ardwell, the brother of Mrs Thomas Scott.

A few days afterwards, he hands to Mr Thomas Scott a formal statement of pecuniary affairs; the result of which was, that the Major had left something not much under L.6000. Major Scott, from all I have heard, was a sober, sedate bachelor, of dull mind and frugal tastes, who, after his retirement from the army, divided his time between his mother's primitive fireside, and the society of a few whist-playing brother officers, that met for an evening rubber at Fortune's tavern. But, making every allowance for his retired and thrifty habits, I infer that the payments made to each of the three brothers out of their father's estate must have, prior to 1816, amounted to L.5000. From the letter conveying this statement (29th May), I extract a few sentences:—

"Dear Tom,

". . . . . Should the possession of this sum, and the certainty that you must, according to the course of nature, in a short space of years succeed to a similar sum of L.3000 belonging to our mother, induce you to turn your thoughts to Scotland, I shall be most happy to forward your views with any influence I may possess; and I have little doubt that, sooner or later, something may be done. But, unfortunately, every avenue is now choked with applicants, whose claims are very strong; for the number of disbanded officers, and public servants dismissed in consequence of Parliament turning restive and refusing the income-tax, is great and increasing. Economy is the order of the day, and I assure you they are shaving properly close. It would, no doubt, be comparatively easy to get you a better situation where you are, but then it is bidding farewell to your country, at least for a long time, and separating your children from all knowledge of those with whom they are naturally connected. I shall anxiously expect to hear from you on your views and wishes. I think, at all events, you ought to get rid of the drudgery of the paymastership—but not without trying to exchange it for something else. I do not know how it is with you—but I do not feel myself quite so *young* as I was when we met last, and I should like well to see my only brother return to his own country and settle, without thoughts of leaving it, till it is exchanged for one that is dark and distant. . . . . . I left all Jack's personal trifles at my mother's disposal. There was nothing of the slightest value, excepting his gold watch, which was my sister's, and a good one. My mother says he had wished my son Walter should have it, as his male representative—which I can only accept on condition *your* little Walter will accept a similar token of regard from his remaining uncle.—Yours affectionately,

W. S."

The letter in which Scott communicated his brother's death to Mr Morritt, gives us his own original opinion of The Antiquary. It has also some remarks on the separation of Lord and Lady Byron—and the "domestic verses" of the noble poet.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. London.

" Edinburgh, May 16, 1816.

" My dear Morritt,

" I have been occupied of late with scenes of domestic distress, my poor brother, Major John Scott, having last week closed a life which wasting disease had long rendered burthensome. His death, under all the circumstances, cannot be termed a subject of deep affliction; and though we were always on fraternal terms of mutual kindness and good-will, yet our habits of life, our taste for society and circles of friends were so totally different, that there was less frequent intercourse between us than our connexion and real liking to each other might have occasioned. Yet it is a heavy consideration to have lost the last but one who was interested in our early domestic life, our habits of boyhood, and our first friends and connexions. It makes one look about and see how the scene has changed around him, and how he himself has been changed with it. My only remaining brother is in Canada, and seems to have an intention of remaining there; so that my mother, now upwards of eighty, has now only one child left to her out of thirteen whom she has borne. She is a most excellent woman, possessed, even at her advanced age, of all the force of mind and sense of duty which have carried her through so many domestic griefs, as the successive death of eleven children, some of them come to men and women's estate, naturally infers. She is the principal subject of my attention at present, and is, I am glad to say, perfectly well in body and composed in mind.

"Nothing can give me more pleasure than the prospect of seeing you in September, which will suit our motions perfectly well. I trust I shall have an opportunity to introduce you to some of our glens which you have not yet seen. But I hope we shall have some mild weather before that time, for we are now in the seventh month of winter, which almost leads me to suppose that we shall see no summer this season. As for spring, that is past praying for. In the month of November last, people were skating in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh; and now, in the middle of May, the snow is lying white on Arthur's Seat, and on the range of the Pentlands. It is really fearful, and the sheep are perishing by scores. *Jam satis terræ nivis, &c.* may well be taken up as the song of eighteen hundred and sixteen.

"So Lord Byron's romance seems to be concluded for one while—and it is surely time, after he has announced, or rather they themselves have announced, half a dozen blackguard newspaper editors, to have been his confidants on the occasion. Surely it is a strange thirst of public fame that seeks such a road to it. But Lord Byron, with high genius and many points of a noble and generous feeling, has Childe Harolded himself, and outlawed himself, into too great a resemblance with the pictures of his imagination. He has one excuse, however, and it is a sad one. I have been reckoned to make a good hit enough at a pirate, or an outlaw, or a smuggling bandit; but I cannot say I was ever so much enchanted with my work as to think of carrying off a *drift* of my neighbour's sheep, or half a dozen of his milk cows. Only I remember, in the rough times, having a scheme with the Duke of Buccleuch, that when the worst came to the worst, we should repair Hermitage Castle, and live, like Robin Hood and his merry men, at the expense of all round us. But this presupposed a grand *bouleversement* of society. In the mean while, I think my noble friend is something like my old peacock, who chooses to bivouac apart from his lady, and sit below my bedroom window, to keep me awake with his screeching lamentation. Only I own he is not equal in melody to Lord Byron, for *Fare-thee-well—and if for ever*, &c., is a very sweet dirge indeed. After all, *C'est genie mal logé*, and that's all that can be said about it.

"I am quite reconciled to your opinions on the income-tax, and am not at all in despair at the prospect of keeping L.200 a-year in my pocket, since the ministers can fadge without it. But their throwing the helve after the hatchet, and giving up the malt-duty because they had lost the other, was droll enough. After all, our fat friend* must learn to live within compass, and fire off no more crackers in the Park, for John Bull is getting dreadfully sore on all sides when money is concerned.

"I sent you, some time since, the Antiquary. It is not so interesting as its predecessors—the period did not admit of so much romantic situation. But it has been more fortunate than any of them in the sale, for 6000 went off in the first six days, and it is now at press again; which is very flattering to the unknown author. Another incognito proposes immediately to resume the second volume of Triermain, which is at present in the state of the Bear and Fiddle. Adieu, dear Morritt. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Speaking of his third novel in a letter of the same date to Terry, Scott says, "It wants the romance of Waverley and the adventure of Guy Mannering; and yet there is some salvation about it, for if a man will paint from nature, he will be likely to amuse those who are daily looking at it."

After a little pause of hesitation, The Antiquary attained popularity not inferior to Guy Mannering; and, though the author appears for a moment to have shared the doubts which he read in the countenance of James Ballantyne, it certainly was, in the sequel, his chief favourite among all his novels. Nor is it difficult to account for this preference, without laying any stress on the fact, that, during a few short weeks, it was pretty commonly talked of as a falling off from its immediate predecessors—and that some minor critics re-echoed this stupid whisper in print. In that view, there were many of its successors that had much stronger claims on the parental instinct of protection. But the truth is, that although Scott's Introduction of 1830 represents him as pleased with fancying that, in the principal personage, he had embalmed a worthy friend of his boyish days, his own antiquarian propensities, originating, perhaps in the kind attentions of George Constable of Wallace-Cragie, and fostered not a little, at about as ductile a period, by those of old Clerk of Eldin, and John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, had by degrees so developed themselves, that he could hardly, even when the Antiquary was published, have scrupled about recognising a quaint caricature of the founder of the Abbotsford Museum, in the inimitable portraiture of the Laird of Monkbarns. The Descriptive Catalogue of that collection, which he began towards the close of his life, but, alas! never finished, is entitled "*Reliquiæ Trottcosianæ—or the Gabions of the late Jonathan Oldbuck, Esq.*"

---

* Shortly after Beau Brummell (immortalized in Don Juan) fell into disgrace with the Prince Regent, and was dismissed from the society of Carlton House, he was riding with another gentleman in the Park, when the Prince met them. His Royal Highness stopt to speak to Brummell's companion—the Beau continued to jog on—and when the other dandy rejoined him, asked with an air of sovereign indifference, "Who is your fat friend?" Such, at least, was the story that went the round of the newspapers at the time, and highly tickled Scott's fancy. I have heard that nobody enjoyed so much as the Prince of Wales himself an earlier specimen of the Beau's assurance. Taking offence at some part of His Royal Highness's conduct or demeanour, "Upon my word," observed Mr Brummell, "if this kind of thing goes on, I shall be obliged to cut Wales, and bring the old King into fashion."

But laying this, which might have been little more than a good-humoured pleasantry, out of the question, there is assuredly no one of all his works on which more of his own early associations have left their image. Of those early associations, as his full-grown tastes were all the progeny, so his genius, in all its happiest efforts, was the "Recording Angel;" and when George Constable first expounded his "Gabions" to the child that was to immortalize his name, they were either wandering hand in hand over the field where the grass still grew rank upon the grave of *Balmawhapple*, or sauntering on the beach where the *Mucklebackets* of Prestonpans dried their nets, singing,

> "Weel may the boatie row, and better may she speed,
> O weel may the boatie row that wins the bairns' bread"—

or telling wild stories about cliff-escapes and the funerals of shipwrecked fishermen.

Considered by itself, without reference to these sources of personal interest, this novel seems to me to possess, almost throughout, in common with its two predecessors, a kind of simple unsought charm, which the subsequent works of the series hardly reached, save in occasional snatches:—like them it is, in all its humbler and softer scenes, the transcript of actual Scottish life, as observed by the man himself. And I think it must also be allowed that he has nowhere displayed his highest art, that of skilful contrast, in greater perfection. Even the tragic romance of Waverley does not set off its Macwheebles and Callum Begs better than the oddities of Jonathan Oldbuck and his circle are relieved, on the one hand, by the stately gloom of the Glenallans, on the other, by the stern affliction of the poor fisherman, who, when discovered repairing the "auld black bitch o' a boat" in which his boy had been lost, and congratulated by his visiter on being capable of the exertion, makes answer, "And what would you have me to do, unless I wanted to see four children starve, because one is drowned? *it's weel wi' you gentles, that can sit in the house wi' handkerchers at your een, when ye lose a friend; but the like o' us maun to our wark again, if our hearts were beating as hard as my hammer.*"

It may be worth noting, that it was in correcting the proof-sheets of this novel that Scott first took to equipping his chapters with mottoes of his own fabrication. On one occasion he happened to ask John Ballantyne, who was sitting by him, to hunt for a particular passage in Beaumont and Fletcher. John did as he was bid, but did not succeed in discovering the lines. "Hang it, Johnnie," cried Scott, "I believe I can make a motto sooner than you will find one." He did so accordingly; and from that hour, whenever memory failed to suggest an appropriate epigraph, he had recourse to the inexhaustible mines of "*old play*" or *old ballad*," to which we owe some of the most exquisite verses that ever flowed from his pen.

Unlike, I believe, most men, whenever Scott neared the end of one composition, his spirits seem to have caught a new spring of buoyancy, and before the last sheet was sent from his desk, he had crowded his brain with the imagination of another fiction. The Antiquary was published, as we have seen, in May, but by the beginning of April he had already opened to the Ballantynes the plan of the first Tales of my Landlord; and—to say nothing of Harold the Dauntless, which he began shortly after the Bridal of Triermain was finished, and which he seems to have kept before him for two years as a congenial plaything, to be taken up whenever the coach brought no proof-sheets to jog him as to serious matters—he had also, before this time, undertaken to write the historical department of the Register for 1814. Mr Southey had, for reasons upon which I do not enter, discontinued his services to that work; and it was now doubly necessary, after trying for one year a less eminent hand, that if the work were not to be dropped altogether, some strenuous exertion should be made to sustain its character. Scott had not yet collected the materials requisite for his historical sketch of a year distinguished for the importance and complexity of its events; but these, he doubted not, would soon reach him, and he felt no hesitation about pledging himself to complete, not only that sketch, but four new volumes of prose romances—and his Harold the Dauntless also, if Ballantyne could make any suitable arrangement on that score—between the April and the Christmas of 1816.

The Antiquary had been published by Constable, but I presume that, in addition to the usual stipulations, he had been again, on that occasion, solicited to relieve John Ballantyne and Co.'s stock to an extent which he did not find quite convenient; and at all events he had, though I know not on what grounds, shown a considerable reluctance of late to employ James Ballantyne and Co. as printers. One or other of these impediments is alluded to in a note of Scott's, which, though undated, has been pasted into John Ballantyne's private letter-book among the documents of the period in question. It is in these words:—

" Dear John,

" I have seen the great swab, who is supple as a glove, and will do ALL, which some interpret NOTHING. However, we shall do well enough.

W. S."

Constable had been admitted, almost from the beginning, into the *secret* of the Novels—and for that, among other reasons, it would have been desirable for the Novelist to have him continue the publisher without interruption; but Scott was led to suspect, that if he were called upon to conclude a bargain for a fourth novel before the third had made its appearance, his scruples as to the matter of *printing* might at least protract the treaty; and why

Scott should have been urgently desirous of seeing the transaction settled before the expiration of the half-yearly term of Whitsunday, is sufficiently explained by the fact, that while so much of the old unfortunate stock of John Ballantyne and Co. still remained on hand—and with it some occasional recurrence of commercial difficulty as to *floating bills* was to be expected—the sanguine author had gone on purchasing one patch of land after another, until his estate at Abbotsford had already grown from 150 to nearly 1000 acres. The property all about his original farm had been in the hands of various small holders (Scotticé *cock-lairds*); these persons were sharp enough to understand, ere long, that their neighbour could with difficulty resist any temptation that might present itself in the shape of an offer of more acres; and thus he proceeded buying up lot after lot of unimproved ground, at extravagant prices, his appetite increasing by what it fed on, while the ejected yeomen set themselves down elsewhere to fatten at their leisure upon the profits, most commonly the anticipated profits, of "The Scotch Novels."

He was ever and anon pulled up with a momentary misgiving,—and resolved that the latest acquisition should be the last, until he could get rid entirely of "John Ballantyne and Co."; but John Ballantyne was, from the utter lightness of his mind, his incapacity to look a day before him, and his eager impatience to enjoy the passing hour, the very last man in the world who could, under such circumstances, have been a serviceable agent. Moreover John, too, had his professional ambition; he was naturally proud of his connexion, however secondary, with the publication of these works—and this connexion, though subordinate, was still very profitable; he must have suspected, that should his name disappear altogether from the list of booksellers, it would be a very difficult matter for him to retain any concern in them; and I cannot, on the whole, but consider it as certain, that, the first and more serious embarrassments being overcome, he was far from continuing to hold by his patron's anxiety for the ultimate and total abolition of their unhappy copartnership. He, at all events, unless when some sudden emergency arose, flattered Scott's own gay imagination, by uniformly representing every thing in the most smiling colours; and though Scott, in his replies, seldom failed to introduce some passing hint of caution—such as "*Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia*"—he more and more took home to himself the agreeable cast of his *Rigdum's* anticipations, and wrote to him in a vein as merry as his own—*e. g.*—"As for our stock,

> "'Twill be wearing awa', John,
> Like snaw-wreaths when it's thaw, John," &c. &c. &c.

I am very sorry, in a word, to confess my conviction that John Ballantyne, however volatile and light-headed, acted at this period with cunning selfishness, both by Scott and by Constable. He well knew that it was to Constable alone that his firm had more than once owed its escape from utter ruin and dishonour; and he must also have known, that had a fair, straightforward effort been made for that purpose, after the triumphant career of the Waverley series had once commenced, nothing could have been more easy than to bring all the affairs of his "back-stock, &c.," to a complete close, by entering into a distinct and candid treaty on that subject, in connexion with the future works of the great Novelist, either with Constable or with any other first-rate house in the trade. But John, foreseeing that, were that unhappy concern quite out of the field, he must himself subside into a mere subordinate member of his brother's printing company, seems to have parried the blow by the only arts of any consequence in which he ever was an adept. He appears to have systematically disguised from Scott the extent to which the whole Ballantyne concern had been sustained by Constable—especially during his Hebridean tour of 1814, and his Continental one of 1815—and prompted and enforced the idea of trying other booksellers from time to time, instead of adhering to Constable, merely for the selfish purposes,—first, of facilitating the immediate discount of bills;—secondly, of further perplexing Scott's affairs, the entire disentanglement of which would have been, as he fancied, prejudicial to his own personal importance.

It was resolved, accordingly, to offer the risk and half profits of the first edition of another new novel—or rather collection of novels—not to Messrs Constable, but to Mr Murray of Albemarle Street, and Mr Blackwood, who was then Murray's agent in Scotland; but it was at the same time resolved, partly because Scott wished to try another experiment on the public sagacity, but partly also, no question, from the wish to spare Constable's feelings, that the title-page of the "Tales of my Landlord" should not bear the magical words "by the Author of Waverley." The facility with which both Murray and Blackwood embraced such a proposal, as no untried novelist, being sane, could have dreamt of hazarding, shows that neither of them had any doubt as to the identity of the author. They both considered the withholding of the avowal on the forthcoming title-page as likely to check very much the first success of the book; but they were both eager to prevent Constable's acquiring a sort of prescriptive right to publish for the unrivalled novelist, and willing to disturb his tenure at this additional, and as they thought it, wholly unnecessary risk.

How sharply the unseen parent watched this first negotiation of his *Jedediah Cleishbotham*, will appear from one of his letters :—

To Mr John Ballantyne, Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, April 29, 1816.

"Dear John,

"James has made one or two important mistakes in the bargain with Murray and Blackwood. Briefly as follows :—

"1stly. Having only authority from me to promise 6000 copies, he proposes they shall have the copyright *for ever*. I will see their noses cheese first.

"2dly. He proposes I shall have twelve months' bills—I have always got six. However, I would not stand on that.

"3dly. He talks of volumes being put into the publishers' hands to consider and decide on. No such thing; a bare perusal at St John Street* only.

"Then for omissions—It is NOT stipulated that we supply the paper and print of successive editions. This must be nailed, and not left to understanding.—Secondly, I will have London bills as well as Blackwood's.

"If they agree to these conditions, good and well. If they demur, Constable must be instantly tried; giving half to the Longmans, and *we* drawing on *them* for that moiety, or Constable lodging *their* bill in our hands. You will understand it is a four volume touch—a work totally different in style and structure from the others; a new cast, in short, of the net which has hitherto made miraculous draughts. I do not limit you to terms, because I think you will make them better than I can do. But he must do more than others, since

---

* James Ballantyne's dwelling-house was in this street, adjoining the Canongate of Edinburgh.

he will not or cannot print with us. For every point but that, I would rather deal with Constable than any one; he has always shown himself spirited, judicious, and liberal. Blackwood must be brought to the point *instantly;* and *whenever* he demurs, Constable must be treated with, for there is no use in suffering the thing to be blown on. At the same time, you need not conceal from him that there were some proposals elsewhere, but you may add, with truth, I would rather close with him.
Yours truly, W. S.

"P. S.—I think Constable should jump at this affair; for I believe the work will be very popular."

Messrs Murray and Blackwood agreed to all the author's conditions here expressed. They also relieved John Ballantyne and Co. of stock to the value of L.500; and at least Mr Murray must, moreover, have subsequently consented to anticipate the period of his payments. At all events, I find, in a letter of Scott's, dated in the subsequent August, this new echo of the old advice:—

To Mr John Ballantyne.

"Dear John,

"I have the pleasure to enclose Murray's acceptances. I earnestly recommend to you to push realizing as much as you can.

'Consider weel, gude man,
We hae but borrowed gear;
The horse that I ride on,
It is John Murray's mear.'

Yours truly, W. SCOTT."

I know not how much of the tale of the Black Dwarf had been seen by Blackwood, in St John Street, before he concluded this bargain for himself and his friend Murray; but when the closing sheets of that novel reached him, he considered them as by no means sustaining the delightful promise of the opening ones. He was a man of strong talents, and, though without any thing that could be called learning, of very respectable information, greatly superior to what has, in this age, been common in his profession; acute, earnest, eminently zealous in whatever he put his hand to; upright, honest, sincere, and courageous. But, as Constable owed his first introduction to the upper world of literature and of society in general to his Edinburgh Review, so did Blackwood his to the Magazine, which has now made his name familiar to the world—and at the period of which I write that miscellany was unborn; he was known only as a diligent antiquarian bookseller of the old town of Edinburgh, and the Scotch agent of the great London publisher, Murray. The abilities, in short, which he lived to develope, were as yet unsuspected—unless, perhaps, among a small circle; and the knowledge of the world, which so few men gather from any thing but painful collision with various conflicting orders of their fellow-men, was not his. He was to the last plain and blunt; at this time I can easily believe him to have been so, to a degree which Scott might look upon as "ungracious"—I take the epithet from one of his letters to James Ballantyne. Mr Blackwood, therefore, upon reading what seemed to him the lame and impotent conclusion of a well-begun story, did not search about for any glossy periphrase, but at once wrote to beg that James Ballantyne would inform the unknown author that such was his opinion. This might possibly have been endured; but Blackwood, feeling, I have no doubt, a genuine enthusiasm for the author's fame, as well as a just tradesman's anxiety as to his own adventure, proceeded to suggest the outline of what would, in his judgment, be a better upwinding of the plot of the Black Dwarf, and concluded his epistle, which he desired to be forwarded to the nameless novelist, with announcing his willingness, in case the proposed alteration were agreed to, that the whole expense of cancelling and reprinting a certain number of sheets should be charged to his own personal account with "James Ballantyne and Co." His letter appears to have further indicated that he had taken counsel with some literary person, on whose taste he placed great reliance, and who, if he had not originated, at least approved of the proposed process of recasting. Had Scott never possessed any such system of inter-agency as the Ballantynes supplied, he would, among other and perhaps greater inconveniences, have escaped that of the want of personal familiarity with several persons, with whose confidence,—and why should I not add? with the innocent gratification of whose little vanities—his own pecuniary interests were often deeply connected. A very little personal contact would have introduced such a character as Blackwood's to the respect, nay, to the affectionate respect, of Scott, who, above all others, was ready to sympathize cordially with honest and able men, in whatever condition of life he discovered them. He did both know and appreciate Blackwood better in after times; but in 1816, when this plain-spoken communication reached him, the name was little more than a name, and his answer to the most solemn of go-betweens, was in these terms, which I sincerely wish I could tell how Signior Aldiborontiphoscophornio translated into any dialect submissible to Blackwood's apprehension.

"Dear James,

"I have received Blackwood's impudent letter. G— d— his soul! Tell him and his coadjutor that I belong to the Black Hussars of Literature, who neither give nor receive criticism. I'll be cursed but this is the most impudent proposal that ever was made.

W. S."

This, and a few other documents referring to the same business, did not come into my hands until both Ballantyne and Blackwood were no more: and it is not surprising that Mr Murray's recollection, if (which I much doubt) he had been at all consulted about it, should not, at this distance of time, preserve any traces of its details. "I remember nothing," he writes to me, "but that one of the very proudest days of my life was that on which I published the first Tales of my Landlord; and a vague notion that I owed the dropping of my connexion with the Great Novelist to some trashy disputes between Blackwood and the Ballantynes."

While these volumes were in progress, Scott found time to make an excursion into Perthshire and Dumbartonshire, for the sake of showing the scenery, made famous in the Lady of the Lake and Waverley, to his wife's old friends Miss Dumergue and Mrs Sarah Nicolson,* who had never before been in Scotland. The account which he gives of these ladies' visit at Abbotsford, and this little tour, in a letter to Mr Morritt, shows the "Black Hussar of Literature" in his gentler and more habitual mood.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M.P. Rokeby Park.

"Abbotsford, 21st August, 1816.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have not had a moment's kindly leisure to answer your kind letter, and to tell how delighted I shall be to see you in this least of all possible dwellings, but where we, nevertheless, can contrive a pilgrim's quarters and the warmest welcome for you and any friend of your journey;—if young Stanley, so much the better. Now, as to the important business with the which I have been occupied, you are to know we have had our kind hostesses of Piccadilly upon a two months' visit to us. We owed them so much hospitality, that we were particularly anxious to make Scotland agreeable to the good girls. But, alas! the wind has blown, and the rain has fallen, in a style which beats all that ever I remembered. We accomplished, with some difficulty, a visit to Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, and, by dint of the hospitality of Cambusmore and the Ross, we defied bad weather, wet roads, and long walks. But the weather settled into regular tempest, when we settled at Abbotsford; and, though the natives, accustomed to bad weather (though not at such a time of year), contrived to brave the extremities of the season, it only served to increase the dismay of our unlucky visiters, who, accustomed only to Paris and London, expected *fiacres* at the Milestane Cross, and a pair of oars at the Deadman's Haugh. Add to this, a strong disposition to *commérage*, when there was no possibility of gratifying it, and a total indisposition to scenery or rural amusements, which were all we had to offer—and you will pity both hosts and guests. I have the gratification to think I fully supported the hospitality of my country. I walked them to death. I talked them to death. I showed them landscapes which the driving rain hardly permitted them to see, and told them of feuds about which they cared as little as I do about their next door news in Piccadilly. Yea, I even played at cards, and as I had Charlotte for a partner, so ran no risk of being scolded, I got on pretty well. Still the weather was so execrable, that, as the old drunken landlord used to say at Arroquhar, 'I was perfectly ashamed of it;' and, to this moment, I wonder how my two friends fought it out so patiently as they did. But the young people and the cottages formed considerable resources. Yesterday they left us, deeply impressed with the conviction, which I can hardly blame, that the sun never shone in Scotland,—which that noble luminary seems disposed to confirm, by making this the first fair day we have seen this month—so that his beams will greet them at Longtown, as if he were determined to put Scotland to utter shame.

---

* The sister of Miss Jane Nicolson.—See vol. i, *ante*, pp. 268, 372.

"In you I expect a guest of a different calibre; and I think (barring downright rain) I can promise you some sport of one kind or other. We have a good deal of game about us; and Walter, to whom I have resigned my gun and license, will be an excellent attendant. He brought in six brace of moorfowl on the 12th, which had (*si fas est diceri*) its own effect in softening the minds of our guests towards this unhappy climate. In other respects things look melancholy enough here. Corn is, however, rising; and the poor have plenty of work, and wages which, though greatly inferior to what they had when hands were scarce, assort perfectly well with the present state of the markets. Most folks try to live as much on their own produce as they can, by way of fighting off distress; and though speculating farmers and landlords must suffer, I think the temporary ague-fit will, on the whole, be advantageous to the country. It will check that inordinate and unbecoming spirit of expense, or rather extravagance, which was poisoning all classes, and bring us back to the sober virtues of our ancestors. It will also have the effect of teaching the landed interest, that their connexion with their farmers should be of a nature more intimate than that of mere payment and receipt of rent, and that the largest offerer for a lease is often the person least entitled to be preferred as a tenant. Above all, it will complete the destruction of those execrable quacks, terming themselves land-doctors, who professed, from a two days' scamper over your estate, to tell you its constitution,—in other words its value,—acre by acre. These men, paid according to the golden hopes they held out, afforded by their reports one principal means of deceiving both landlord and tenant, by setting an ideal and extravagant value upon land, which seemed to entitle the one to expect, and the other to offer, rent far beyond what any expectation formed by either, upon their own acquaintance with the property, could rationally have warranted. More than one landed gentleman has cursed, in my presence, the day he ever consulted one of those empirics, whose prognostications induced him to reject the offers of substantial men, practically acquainted with the *locale*. Ever, my dear Morritt, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In October, 1816, appeared the Edinburgh Annual Register, containing Scott's historical sketch of the year 1814—a composition which would occupy two such volumes as the reader now has in his hand. Though executed with extraordinary rapidity, the sketch is as clear as spirited; but I need say no more of it here, as the author travels mostly over the same ground again in his Life of Napoleon.

Scott's correspondence proves, that during this autumn he had received many English guests besides the good spinsters of Piccadilly and Mr Morritt. I regret to add, it also proves that he had continued all the while to be annoyed with calls for money from John Ballantyne; yet before the 12th of November called him to Edinburgh, he appears to have nearly finished the first "Tales of my Landlord." He had, moreover, concluded a negotiation with Constable and Longman for a series of Letters on the History of Scotland:—of which, however, if he ever wrote any part, the MS. has not been discovered. It is probable that he may have worked some detached fragments into his long subsequent "Tales of a Grandfather." The following letter shows likewise that he was now busy with plans of building at Abbotsford, and deep in consultation on that subject with an artist eminent for his skill in Gothic architecture,—Mr Edward Blore, R.A.

To Daniel Terry, Esq.

"November 12th, 1816.

"My dear Terry,

"I have been shockingly negligent in acknowledging your repeated favours; but it so happened, that I have had very little to *say*, with a great deal to *do*; so that I trusted to your kindness to forgive my apparent want of kindness, and indisputable lack of punctuality. You will readily suppose that I have heard with great satisfaction of the prosperity of your household, particularly of the good health of my little namesake and his mother. Godmothers of yore used to be fairies; and though only a godfather, I think of sending you, one day, a *fairy* gift—a little drama, namely, which, if the audience be indulgent, may be of use to him. Of course, you will stand godfather to it yourself: it is yet only in embryo—a sort of poetical Hans in Kelder—nor am I sure when I can bring him forth; not for this season, at any rate. You will receive, in the course of a few days, my late *whereabouts* in four volumes: there are two tales—the last of which I really prefer to any fictitious narrative I have yet been able to produce—the first is wish-washy enough. The subject of the second tale lies among the old Scottish Cameronians—nay, I'll tickle ye off a Covenanter as readily as old Jack could do a young Prince; and a rare fellow he is, when brought forth in his true colours. Were it not for the necessity of using scriptural language, which is essential to the character, but improper for the stage, it would be very dramatic. But of all this you will judge by and by. To give the go-by to the public, I have doubled and leaped into my form, like a hare in snow: that is, I have changed my publisher, and come forth like a maiden knight's white shield (there is a conceit!) without any adhesion to fame gained in former adventures (another!) or, in other words, with a virgin title-page (another!).—I should not be so lighthearted about all this, but that it is very nearly finished and out, which is always a blithe moment for Mr Author. And now to other matters. The books came safe, and were unpacked two days since, on our coming to town—most ingeniously were they stowed in the legs of the very handsome stand for Lord Byron's vase, with which our friend George Bullock has equipped me. I was made very happy to receive him at Abbotsford, though only for a start; and no less so to see Mr Blore, from whom I received your last letter. He is a very fine young man, modest, simple, and unaffected in his manners, as well as a most capital artist. I have had the assistance of both these gentlemen in arranging an addition to the cottage at Abbotsford, intended to connect the present farm-house with the line of low buildings to the right of it. Mr Bullock will show you the plan, which I think is very ingenious. He has promised to give it his consideration with respect to the interior; and Mr Blore has drawn me a very handsome elevation, both to the road and to the river. I expect to get some decorations from the old Tolbooth of Edinburgh, particularly the copestones of the door-way, or lintels, as we call them, and a *niche* or two—one very handsome indeed! Better get a niche *from* the Tolbooth than a niche *in* it, to which such building operations are apt to bring the projectors. This addition will give me:—first,—a handsome boudoir, in which I intend to place Mr Bullock's Shakspeare,* with his superb cabinet, which serves as a pedestal. This opens into the little drawingroom, to which it serves as a chapel of ease; and on the other side, to a handsome dining-parlour of 27 feet by 18, with three windows to the north, and one to the south, the last to be Gothic, and filled with stained glass. Besides these commodities, there is a small conservatory or greenhouse; and a study for myself, which we design to fit up with ornaments from Melrose Abbey. Bullock made several casts with his own hands—masks, and so forth, delightful for cornices, &c.

"Do not let Mrs Terry think of the windows till little Wat is duly cared after.† I am informed by Mr Blore that he is a fine thriving fellow, very like papa. About my armorial bearings: I will send you a correct drawing of them as soon as I can get hold of Blore; namely—of the scutcheons of my grandsires on each side, and my own. I could detail them in the jargon of heraldry, but it is better to speak to your eyes by translating them into coloured drawings, as the sublime science of armory has fallen into some neglect of late years, with all its mascles, buckles, crescents, and boars of the first, second, third, and fourth.

---

* A cast from the monumental effigy at Stratford-upon-Avon—now in the library at Abbotsford—was the gift of Mr George Bullock, long distinguished in London as a collector of curiosities for sale, and honourably so by his "*Mexican Museum*," which formed during several years a popular exhibition throughout the country. This ingenious man was, as the reader will see in the sequel, a great favourite with Scott.

† Mrs Terry had offered the services of her elegant pencil in designing some windows of painted glass for Scott's armoury, &c.

I was very sorry I had no opportunity of showing attention to your friend Mr Abbot, not being in town at the time. I grieve to say, that neither the genius of Kean, nor the charms of Miss O'Neill could bring me from the hill-side and the sweet society of Tom Purdie. All our family are very well—Walter as tall nearly as I am, fishing salmon and shooting moor-fowl and black-cock, in good style; the girls growing up, and, as yet, not losing their simplicity of character; little Charles excellent at play, and not deficient at learning, when the young dog will take pains. Abbotsford is looking pretty at last, and the planting is making some show. I have now several hundred acres thereof, running out as far as beyond the lake. We observe with great pleasure the steady rise which you make in public opinion, and expect, one day, to hail you stage-manager. Believe me, my dear Terry, always very much yours,

W. Scott."

"P.S.—The Counsellor, and both the Ballantynes are well and hearty."

On the first of December the first series of the Tales of my Landlord appeared, and notwithstanding the silence of the titlepage, and the change of publishers, and the attempt which had certainly been made to vary the style both of delineation and of language, all doubts whether they were or were not from the same hand with Waverley had worn themselves out before the lapse of a week. The enthusiasm of their reception among the highest literary circles of London may be gathered from the following letter:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Albemarle Street, 14th December, 1816.

"Dear Sir,

"Although I dare not address you as the author of certain 'Tales' (which, however, must be written either by Walter Scott or the Devil), yet nothing can restrain me from thinking it is to your influence with the author that I am indebted for the essential honour of being one of their publishers, and I must intrude upon you to offer my most hearty thanks—not divided, but doubled—alike for my worldly gain therein, and for the great acquisition of professional reputation which their publication has already procured me. I believe I might, under any oath that could be proposed, swear that I never experienced such unmixed pleasure as the reading of this exquisite work has afforded me; and if you could see me, as the author's literary chamberlain, receiving the unanimous and vehement praises of every one who has read it, and the curses of those whose needs my scanty supply could not satisfy, you might judge of the sincerity with which I now entreat you to assure him of the most complete success. Lord Holland said, when I asked his opinion—'Opinion! We did not one of us go to bed last night—nothing slept but my gout.' Frere, Hallam, Boswell,[*] Lord Glenbervie, William Lamb,[†] all agree that it surpasses all the other novels. Gifford's estimate is increased at every reperusal. Heber says there are only two men in the world—Walter Scott and Lord Byron. Between you you have given existence to a THIRD. Ever your faithful servant,

JOHN MURRAY."

---

[*] The late James Boswell, Esq., of the Temple—second son of *Bozzy*.

[†] The Honourable William Lamb—now Lord Melbourne.

To this cordial effusion Scott returned the following answer. It was necessary, since he had fairly resolved against compromising his incognito, that he should be prepared not only to repel the impertinent curiosity of strangers, but to evade the proffered congratulations of overflowing kindness. He contrived, however, to do so, on this and all similar occasions, in a style of equivoque which could never be seriously misunderstood:—

To John Murray, Esq., Albemarle Street, London.

"Edinburgh, 18th December, 1816.

"My dear Sir,

"I give you heartily joy of the success of the Tales, although I do not claim that paternal interest in them which my friends do me the credit to assign me. I assure you I have never read a volume of them until they were printed, and can only join with the rest of the world in applauding the true and striking portraits which they present of old Scottish manners. I do not expect implicit reliance to be placed on my disavowal, because I know very well that he who is disposed not to own a work must necessarily deny it, and that otherwise his secret would be at the mercy of all who choose to ask the question, since silence in such a case must always pass for consent, or rather assent. But I have a mode of convincing you that I am perfectly serious in my denial—pretty similar to that by which Solomon distinguished the fictitious from the real mother—and that is, by reviewing the work, which I take to be an operation equal to that of quartering the child. But this is only on condition I can have Mr Erskine's assistance, who admires the work greatly more than I do, though I think the painting of the second tale both true and powerful. I knew Old Mortality very well; his name was Paterson, but few knew him otherwise than by his nickname. The first tale is not very original in its concoction, and lame and impotent in its conclusion. My love to Gifford. I have been over head and ears in work this summer, or I would have sent the Gypsies; indeed I was partly stopped by finding it impossible to procure a few words of their language.

"Constable wrote to me about two months since, desirous of having a new edition of Paul; but not hearing from you, I conclude you are still on hand. Longman's people had then only sixty copies.

"Kind compliments to Heber, whom I expected at Abbotsford this summer; also to Mr Croker and all your four o'clock visitors. I am just going to Abbotsford to make a small addition to my premises there. I have now about 700 acres, thanks to the booksellers and the discerning public. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. I have much to ask about Lord Byron, if I had time. The third canto of the Childe is inimitable. Of the last poems, there are one or two which indicate rather an irregular play of imagination.* What a pity that a man of such exquisite genius will not be contented to be happy on the ordinary terms! I declare my heart bleeds when I think of him, self-banished from the country to which he is an honour."

Mr Murray, gladly embracing this offer of an article for his journal on the Tales of My Landlord, begged Scott to take a wider scope, and, dropping all respect for the idea of a divided parentage, to place together any materials he might have for the illustration of the Waverley Novels in general; he suggested, in particular, that, instead of drawing up a long-promised disquisition on the Gypsies in a separate shape, whatever he had to say concerning that picturesque generation might be introduced by way of comment on the character of *Meg Merrilees.* What Scott's original conception had been I know not; he certainly gave his reviewal all the breadth which Murray could have wished, and *inter alia,* diversified it with a few anecdotes of the Scottish Gypsies. But the late excellent biographer of John Knox, Dr Thomas M'Crie, had, in the mean time, considered the representation of the Covenanters in the story of Old Mortality as so unfair as to demand at his hands a very serious rebuke. The Doctor forthwith published, in a magazine called the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, a set of papers, in which the historical foundations of that tale were attacked with indignant warmth; and though Scott, when he first heard of these invectives, expressed his resolution never even to read them, he found the impression they were producing so strong, that he soon changed his purpose, and finally devoted a very large part of his article for the Quarterly Review to an elaborate defence of his own picture of the Covenanters.*

---

* Parisina—The Dream—and the "Domestic Pieces," had been recently published.

---

* Since I have mentioned this reviewal, I may as well, to avoid recurrence to it, express here my conviction, that Erskine, not Scott, was the author of the critical estimate of the Waverley novels which it embraces—although for the purpose of mystification Scott had taken the trouble to transcribe the paragraphs in which that estimate is contained. At the same time I cannot but add that, had Scott really been the sole author of this reviewal, he need not have incurred the severe censure which has been applied to his supposed conduct in the matter. After all, his judgment of his own works must have been allowed to be not above, but very far under the mark; and the whole affair would, I think, have been considered by every candid person exactly as the letter about Solomon and the rival mothers was by Murray, Gifford, and "the four o'clock visitors" of Albemarle Street—as a good joke. A better joke certainly than the allusion to the report of Thomas Scott being the real author of

Before the first Tales of my Landlord were six weeks' old, two editions of 2000 copies disappeared, and a third of 2000 was put to press; but notwithstanding this rapid success, which was still further continued, and the friendly relations which always subsisted between the author and Mr Murray, circumstances ere long occurred which carried the publication of the work into the hands of Messrs Constable.

The author's answer to Dr M'Crie, and his Introduction of 1830, have exhausted the historical materials on which he constructed his Old Mortality; and the origin of the Black Dwarf, as to the conclusion of which story he appears on reflection to have completely adopted the opinion of honest Blackwood, has already been sufficiently illustrated by an anecdote of his early wanderings in Tweeddale. The latter tale, however imperfect, and unworthy as a work of art to be placed high in the catalogue of his productions, derives a singular interest from its delineation of the dark feelings so often connected with physical deformity; feelings which appear to have diffused their shadow over the whole genius of Byron—and which, but for this single picture, we

---

Waverley, at the close of the article, was never penned; and I think it includes a confession over which a misanthrope might have chuckled:—" We intended here to conclude this long article, when a strong report reached us of certain Transatlantic confessions, which, if genuine (though of this we know nothing), assign a different author to these volumes than the party suspected by our Scottish correspondents. Yet a critic may be excused seizing upon the nearest suspicious person, on the principle happily expressed by Claverhouse, in a letter to the Earl of Linlithgow. He had been, it seems, in search of a gifted weaver, who used to hold forth at conventicles: 'I sent for the webster (weaver), they brought in his *brother* for him: though he, may be, cannot preach like his brother, I doubt not but he is as well-principled as he, wherefore I thought it would be no great fault to give him the trouble to go to jail with the rest!' "—*Miscellaneous Prose Works*, Vol. xix, Pp. 85-6.

should hardly have conceived ever to have passed through Scott's happier mind. All the bitter blasphemy of spirit which, from infancy to the tomb, swelled up in Byron against the unkindness of nature; which sometimes perverted even his filial love into a sentiment of diabolical malignity; all this black and desolate train of reflections must have been encountered and deliberately subdued by the manly parent of the Black Dwarf. Old Mortality, on the other hand, is remarkable as the *novelist's* first attempt to re-people the past by the power of imagination working on materials furnished by books. In Waverley he revived the fervid dreams of his boyhood, and drew, not from printed records, but from the artless oral narratives of his *Invernahyles.* In Guy Mannering, he embodied characters and manners familiar to his own wandering youth. But whenever his letters mention Old Mortality in its progress, they represent him as strong in the confidence that the industry with which he had pored over a library of forgotten tracts would enable him to identify himself with the time in which they had birth, as completely as if he had listened with his own ears to the dismal sermons of Peden, ridden with Claverhouse and Dalzell in the rout of Bothwell, and been an advocate at the bar of the Privy-Council, when Lauderdale catechised and tortured the assassins of Archbishop Sharp. To reproduce a departed age with such minute and lifelike accuracy as this tale exhibits, demanded a far more energetic sympathy of imagination than had been called for in any effort of his serious verse. It is indeed most curiously instructive for any student of art to compare the Roundheads of Rokeby with the Bluebonnets of Old Mortality. For the rest—the story is framed with a deeper skill than any of the preceding novels; the canvass is a broader one; the characters are contrasted and projected with a power and felicity which neither he nor any other master ever surpassed; and, notwithstanding all that has been urged against him as a disparager of the Covenanters, it is to me very doubtful whether the inspiration of romantic chivalry ever prompted him to nobler emotions than he has lavished on the re-animation of their stern and solemn enthusiasm. This work has always appeared to me the Marmion of his novels.

I have disclaimed the power of farther illustrating its historical groundworks, but I am enabled by Mr Train's kindness to give some interesting additions to Scott's own account of this novel as a composition. The generous Supervisor visited him in Edinburgh in May 1816, a few days after the publication of the Antiquary, carrying with him several relics which he wished to present to his collection, among others a purse that had belonged to Rob Roy; and also a fresh heap of traditionary gleanings, which he had gathered among the tale-tellers of his district. One of these last was in the shape of a letter to Mr Train from a Mr Broadfoot, "schoolmaster at the clachan of Penningham, and author of *the celebrated song* of the Hills of Galloway"—with which I confess myself unacquainted. Broadfoot had facetiously signed his communication, *Clashbottom*—"a professional appellation, derived," says Mr Train, "from the use of the birch, and by which he was usually addressed among his companions,—who assembled, not at the Wallace Inn of Gandercleuch, but at the sign of the Shoulder of Mutton in Newton-Stewart." Scott received these gifts with benignity, and invited the friendly donor to breakfast next morning. He found him at work in his library, and surveyed with enthusiastic curiosity the furniture of the room, especially its only picture, a portrait of Graham of Claverhouse. Train expressed the surprise with which every one who had known Dundee only in the pages of the Presbyterian Annalists, must see for the first time that beautiful and melancholy visage, worthy of the most pathetic dreams of romance. Scott replied, "that no character had been so foully traduced as the Viscount of Dundee—that, thanks to Wodrow, Cruikshanks, and such chroniclers, he, who was every inch a soldier and a gentleman, still passed among the Scottish vulgar for a ruffian desperado, who rode a goblin horse, was proof against shot, and in league with the Devil." "Might he not," said Mr Train, "be made, in good hands, the hero of a national romance as interesting as any about either Wallace or Prinee Charlie?" "He might," said Scott, "but your western zealots would require to be faithfully portrayed in order to bring him out with the right effect." "And what," resumed Train, "if the story were to be delivered as if from the mouth of *Old Mortality?* Would *he* not do as well as *the Minstrel* did in the Lay?" "Old Mortality!" said Scott—"who was he?" Mr Train then told what he could remember of old Paterson, and seeing how much his story interested the hearer, offered to enquire farther about that enthusiast on his return to Galloway. "Do so by all means," said Scott—"I assure you I shall look with anxiety for your communication." He said nothing at this time of his own meeting with Old Mortality in the churchyard of Dunotter—and I think there can be no doubt that that meeting was thus recalled to his recollection; or that to this intercourse with Mr Train we owe the whole machinery of the Tales of my Landlord, as well as the adoption of Claverhouse's period for the scene of one of its first fictions. I think it highly probable that we owe a further obligation to the worthy Supervisor's presentation of Rob Roy's *spleuchan.*

The original design for the First Series of Jedediah

Cleishbotham was, as Scott told me, to include four separate tales illustrative of four districts of the country, in the like number of volumes; but, his imagination once kindled upon any theme, he could not but pour himself out freely—so that notion was soon abandoned.

CHAPTER II.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS PUBLISHED—SCOTT ASPIRES TO BE A BARON OF THE EXCHEQUER—LETTER TO THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH CONCERNING POACHERS, ETC.—FIRST ATTACK OF CRAMP IN THE STOMACH—LETTERS TO MORRITT—TERRY—AND MRS MACLEAN CLEPHANE—STORY OF THE DOOM OF DEVORGOIL—JOHN KEMBLE'S RETIREMENT FROM THE STAGE—WILLIAM LAIDLAW ESTABLISHED AT KAESIDE—NOVEL OF ROB ROY PROJECTED—LETTER TO SOUTHEY ON THE RELIEF OF THE POOR, ETC.—LETTER TO LORD MONTAGU ON HOGG'S QUEEN'S WAKE, AND ON THE DEATH OF FRANCES LADY DOUGLAS.

1817.

WITHIN less than a month, the Black Dwarf and Old Mortality were followed by "Harold the Dauntless, by the author of the Bridal of Triermain." This poem had been, it appears, begun several years back; nay, part of it had been actually printed before the appearance of Childe Harold, though that circumstance had escaped the author's remembrance when he penned, in 1830, his Introduction to the Lord of the Isles; for he there says, "I am still astonished at my having committed the gross error of selecting the very name which Lord Byron had made so famous." The volume was published by Messrs Constable, and had, in those booksellers' phrase, "considerable success." It has never, however, been placed on a level with Triermain; and though it contains many vigorous pictures, and splendid verses, and here and there some happy humour, the confusion and harsh transitions of the fable, and the dim rudeness of character and manners, seem sufficient to account for this inferiority in public favour. It is not surprising that the author should have redoubled his aversion to the notion of any more serious performance in verse. He had seized on an instrument of wider compass, and which, handled with whatever rapidity, seemed to reveal at every touch, treasures that had hitherto slept unconsciously within him. He had thrown off his fetters, and might well go forth rejoicing in the native elasticity of his strength.

It is at least a curious coincidence in literary history, that, as Cervantes, driven from the stage of Madrid by the success of Lope de Vega, threw himself into prose romance, and produced, at the moment when the world considered him as silenced for ever, the Don Quixote which has outlived Lope's two thousand triumphant dramas—so Scott, abandoning verse to Byron, should have rebounded from his fall by the only prose romances which seem to be classed with the masterpiece of Spanish genius, by the general judgment of Europe.

I shall insert two letters, in which he announces the publication of Harold the Dauntless. In the first of them he also mentions the light and humorous little piece entitled The Sultan of Serendib, or the Search after Happiness, originally published in a weekly paper, after the fashion of the old Essayists, which about this time issued from John Ballantyne's premises, under the appropriate name of "the Sale-Room." The paper had slender success; and though Scott wrote several things for it, none of them, except this metrical essay, attracted any notice. *The Sale-Room* was, in fact, a dull and hopeless concern; and I should scarcely have thought it worth mentioning, but for the confirmation it lends to my suspicion that Mr John Ballantyne was very unwilling, after all his warnings, to retire completely from the field of publishing.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 30, 1817.

"My dear Morritt,

"I hope to send you in a couple of days Harold the Dauntless, which has not turned out so good as I thought it would have done. I begin to get too old and stupid, I think, for poetry, and will certainly never again adventure on a grand scale. For amusement, and to help a little publication that is going on here, I have spun a doggrel tale called the Search after Happiness, of which I shall send a copy by post, if it is of a frankable size; if not, I can put it up with the Dauntless. Among other misfortunes of Harold is his name, but the thing was partly printed before Childe Harold was in question.

"My great and good news at present is, that the bog (that perpetual hobbyhorse) has produced a commodity of most excellent marle, and promises to be of the very last consequence to my wild ground in the neighbourhood; for nothing can equal the effect of marle as a top-dressing. Methinks (in my mind's eye, Horatio) I see all the blue-bank, the hinny-lee, and the other provinces of my poor kingdom, waving with deep rye-grass and clover, like the meadows at Rokeby. In honest truth, it will do me yeoman's service.

"My next good tidings are, that Jedediah carries the world before him. Six thousand have been disposed of, and three thousand more are pressing onward, which will be worth L.2500 to the worthy pedagogue of Gandercleuch. Some of the Scotch Whigs, of the right old fanatical leaven, have waxed wroth with Jedediah—

'But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?
The cold moon shines by night,
And when we wander here and there,
We then do go most right.'

After all, these honest gentlemen are like Queen Elizabeth in their ideas of portrait-painting. They require the pictures of their predecessors to be likenesses, and at the same time demand that they shall be painted without shade, being probably of opinion, with the virgin majesty of England, that there is no such thing in nature.

"I presume you will be going almost immediately to London—at least all our Scotch members are requested to be at their posts, the meaning of which I cannot pretend to guess. The finances are the only ticklish matter, but there is, after all, plenty of money in the country, now that our fever-fit is a little over. In Britain, when there is the least damp upon the spirits of the public, they are exactly like people in a crowd, who take the alarm, and shoulder each other to and fro till some dozen or two of the weakest are borne down and trodden to death; whereas, if they would but have patience and remain quiet, there would be a safe and speedy end to their embarrassment. How we want Billie Pitt now to get up and give the tone to our feelings and opinions!

"As I take up this letter to finish the same, I hear the Prince Regent has been attacked and fired at. Since he was not hurt (for I should be sincerely sorry for my fat friend), I see nothing but good luck to result from this assault. It will make him a good manageable boy, and, I think, secure you a quiet Session of Parliament. Adieu, my dear Morritt, God bless you. Let me know if the gimcracks come safe—I mean the book, &c. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Lady Louisa Stuart, Gloucester Place, London.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 31, 1817.

"My dear Lady Louisa,

"This accompanies *Harold the Dauntless.* I thought once I should have made it something clever, but it turned vapid upon my imagination; and I finished it at last with hurry and impatience. Nobody knows, that has not tried the feverish trade of poetry, how much it depends upon mood and whim: I don't wonder, that, in dismissing all the other deities of Paganism, the Muse should have been retained by common consent; for, in sober reality, writing good verses seems to depend upon something separate from the volition of the author. I sometimes think my fingers set up for themselves, independent of my head; for twenty times I have begun a thing on a certain plan, and never in my life adhered to it (in a work of imagination, that is) for half an hour together. I would hardly write this sort of egotistical trash to any one but yourself, yet it is very true for all that. What my kind correspondent had anticipated on account of Jedediah's effusions, has actually taken place; and the author of a very good life of Knox has, I understand, made a most energetic attack, upon the score that the old Covenanters are not treated with decorum. I have not read it, and certainly never shall. I really think there is nothing in the book that is not very fair and legitimate subject of raillery; and I own I have my suspicions of that very susceptible devotion which so readily takes offence: such men should not read books of amusement; but do they suppose, because they are virtuous, and choose to be thought outrageously so, 'there shall be no cakes and ale?'—'Ay, by our lady, and ginger shall be hot in the mouth too.' As for the consequences to the author, they can only affect his fortune or his temper—the former, such as it is, has been long fixed beyond shot of these sort of fowlers; and for my temper, I considered always that, by subjecting myself to the irritability which much greater authors have felt on occasions of literary dispute, I should be laying in a plentiful stock of unhappiness for the rest of my life. I therefore make it a rule never to read the attacks made upon me. I remember being capable of something like this sort of self-denial at a very early period of life, for I could not be six years old. I had been put into my bed in the nursery, and two servant girls sat down by the embers of the fire, to have their own quiet chat, and the one began to tell a most dismal ghost story, of which I remember the commencement distinctly at this moment; but perceiving which way the tale was tending, and though necessarily curious, being at the same time conscious that, if I listened on, I should be frightened out of my wits for the rest of the night, I had the force to cover up my head in the bed-clothes, so that I could not hear another word that was said. The only inconvenience attending a similar prudential line of conduct in the present case, is, that it may seem like a deficiency of spirit; but I am not much afraid of that being laid to my charge—my fault in early life (I hope long since corrected) having lain rather the other way. And so I say, with mine honest Prior—

'Sleep, Philo, untouch'd, on my peaceable shelf,
Nor take it amiss that so little I heed thee;
I've no malice at thee, and some love for myself—
Then why should I answer, since first I must read thee?'

"So you are getting finely on in London. I own I am very glad of it. I am glad the banditti act like banditti, because it will make men of property look round them in time. This country is very like the toys which folks buy for children, and which, tumble them about in any way the urchins will, are always brought to their feet again, by the lead deposited in their extremities. The mass of property has the same effect on our Constitution, and is a sort of ballast which will always *right* the vessel, to use a sailor's phrase, and bring it to its due equipoise.

"Ministers have acted most sillily in breaking up the burgher volunteers in large towns. On the contrary, the service should have been made coercive. Such men have a moral effect upon the minds of the populace, besides their actual force, and are so much interested in keeping good order, that you may always rely on them, especially as a corps, in which there is necessarily a common spirit of union and confidence. But all this is nonsense again, quoth my Uncle Toby to himself.—Adieu, my dear Lady Louisa; my sincere good wishes always attend you. W. S."

Not to disturb the narrative of his literary proceedings, I have deferred until now the mention of an attempt which Scott made during the winter of 1816-1817, to exchange his seat at the Clerk's table for one on the bench of the Scotch Court of Exchequer. It had often occurred to me, in the most prosperous years of his life, that such a situation would have suited him better in every respect than that which he held, and that his never attaining a promotion, which the Scottish public would have considered so naturally due to his character and services, reflected little honour on his political allies. But at the period when I was entitled to hint this to him, he appeared to have made up his mind that the rank of Clerk of Session was more compatible than that of a Supreme Judge with the habits of a literary man, who was perpetually publishing, and whose writings were generally of the imaginative order. I had also witnessed the zeal with which he seconded the views of more than one of his own friends, when their ambition was directed to the Exchequer bench. I remained, in short, ignorant that he ever had seriously thought of it for himself, until the ruin of his worldly fortunes in 1826; nor had I any information that his wish to obtain it had ever been distinctly stated, until certain letters, one of which I shall introduce, were placed in my hands after his death, by the present Duke of Buccleuch. The late Duke's answers to these letters are also before me; but of them it is sufficient to say, that, while they show the warmest anxiety to serve Scott, they refer to private matters, which ultimately rendered it inconsistent with his Grace's feelings to interfere at the time in question with the distribution of Crown patronage. I incline to think, on the whole, that the death of this nobleman, which soon after left the influence of his house in abeyance, must have, far more than any other circumstance, determined Scott to renounce all notions of altering his professional position.

To the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c.

"Edinburgh, 11th Dec. 1816.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"Your Grace has been so much my constant and kind friend and patron through the course of my life, that I trust I need no apology for thrusting upon your consideration some ulterior views, which have been suggested to me by my friends, and which I will either endeavour to prosecute, time and place serving, or lay aside all thoughts of, as they appear to your Grace feasible, and likely to be forwarded by your patronage. It has been suggested to me, in a word, that there would be no impropriety in my being put in nomination as a candidate for the situation of a Baron of Exchequer, when a vacancy shall take place. The difference of the emolument between that situation and those which I now hold, is just L.400 a-year, so that, in that point of view, it is not a very great object. But there is a difference in the rank, and also in the leisure afforded by a Baron's situation; and a man may, without condemnation, endeavour, at my period of life, to obtain as much honour and ease as he can handsomely come by. My pretensions to such an honour (next to your Grace's countenancing my wishes) would rest very much on the circumstance that my nomination would vacate two good offices (Clerk of Session and Sheriff of Selkirkshire) to the amount of L.1000 and L.300 a-year; and, besides, would extinguish a pension of L.300 which I have for life, over and above my salary as Clerk of Session, as having been in office at the time when the Judicature Act deprived us of a part of our vested fees and emoluments. The extinction of this pension would be just so much saved to the public. I am pretty confident also that I should be personally acceptable to our friend the Chief Baron.* But whether all or any of these circumstances will weigh much in my favour, must solely and entirely rest with your Grace, without whose countenance it would be folly in me to give the matter a second thought. *With* your patronage, both my situation and habits of society may place my hopes as far as any who are likely to apply; and your interest would be strengthened by the opportunity of placing some good friend in Selkirkshire, besides converting the Minstrel of the Clan into a Baron,—a transmutation worthy of so powerful and kind a chief. But if your Grace thinks I ought to drop thoughts of this preferment, I am bound to say, that I think myself as well provided for by my friends and the public as I have the least title to expect, and that I am perfectly contented and grateful for what I have received. Ever your Grace's faithful and truly obliged servant,

---

* The late Right Honourable Robert Dundas of Arniston, Chief Baron of the Scotch Exchequer; one of Scott's earliest and kindest friends in that distinguished family.

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter, to the same noble friend, contains a slight allusion to this affair of the Barony; but I insert it for a better reason. The Duke had, it seems, been much annoyed by some depredations on his game in the district of Ettrick Water; and more so by the ill use which some boys from Selkirk made of his liberality, in allowing the people of that town free access to his beautiful walks on the banks of the Yarrow, adjoining Newark and Bowhill. The Duke's forester, by name Thomas Hudson, had recommended rigorous measures with reference to both these classes of offenders, and the Sheriff was of course called into council:—

To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c. &c.

"Abbotsford, January 11, 1817.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I have been thinking anxiously about the disagreeable affair of Tom Hudson, and the impudent ingratitude of the Selkirk rising generation, and I will take the usual liberty your friendship permits me, of saying what occurs to me on each subject. Respecting the shooting, the crime is highly punishable, and we will omit no enquiries to discover the individuals guilty. Charles Erskine, who is a good police officer, will be sufficiently active. I know my friend and kinsman, Mr Scott of Harden, feels very anxious to oblige your Grace, and I have little doubt that if you will have the goodness to mention to him this unpleasant circumstance, he would be anxious to put his game under such regulations as should be agreeable to you. But I believe the pride and pleasure he would feel in obliging your Grace, as heading one of the most ancient and most respectable branches of your name (if I may be pardoned for saying so much in our favour), would be certainly much more gratified by a compliance with your personal request, than if it came through any other channel. Your Grace knows there are many instances in life in which the most effectual way of conferring a favour is condescending to accept one. I have known Harden long and most intimately—a more respectable man either for feeling, or talent, or knowledge of human life, is rarely to be met with. But he is rather indecisive—requiring some instant stimulus in order to make him resolve to do, not only what he knows to be right, but what he really wishes to do, and means to do one time or other. He is exactly Prior's Earl of Oxford:—

'Let that be done which Mat doth say'—
'Yea,' quoth the Earl, '*but not to-day.*'

And so exit Harden and enter Selkirk.

"I know hardly any thing more exasperating than the conduct of the little blackguards, and it will be easy to discover and make an example of the biggest and most insolent. In the mean while, my dear Lord, pardon my requesting you will take no general or sweeping resolution as to the Selkirk folks. Your Grace lives near them—your residence, both from your direct beneficence, and the indirect advantages which they derive from that residence, is of the utmost consequence; and they must be made sensible that all these advantages are endangered by the very violent and brutal conduct of their children. But I think your Grace will be inclined to follow this up only for the purpose of correction, not for that of requital. They are so much beneath you, and so much in your power, that this would be unworthy of you—especially as all the inhabitants of the little country town must necessarily be included in the punishment. Were your Grace really angry with them, and acting accordingly, you might ultimately feel the regret of my old schoolmaster, who, when he had knocked me down, apologized by saying he did not know his own strength. After all, those who look for any thing better than ingratitude from the uneducated and unreflecting mass of a corrupted population, must always be deceived ; and the better the heart is that has been expanded towards them, their wants, and their wishes, the deeper is the natural feeling of disappointment. But it is our duty to fight on, doing what good we can (and surely the disposition and the means were never more happily united than in your Grace), and trusting to God Almighty, whose grace ripens the seeds we commit to the earth, that our benefactions shall bear fruit. And now, my Lord, asking your pardon for this discharge of my conscience, and assuring your Grace I have no wish to exchange my worsted gown, or the remote *Pisgah* exchange of a silk one, for the cloak of a presbyterian parson, even with the certainty of succeeding to the first of your numerous Kirk-presentations, I take the liberty to add my own opinion. The elder boys must be looked out and punished, and the parents severely reprimanded, and the whole respectable part of the town made sensible of the loss they must necessarily sustain by the discontinuance of your patronage. And at, or about the same time, I should think it proper if your Grace were to distinguish by any little notice such Selkirk people working with you as have their families under good order.

" I am taking leave of Abbotsford *multum gemens*, and have been just giving directions for planting upon *Turnagain.* When shall we eat a cold luncheon there, and look at the view, and root up the monster in his abyss ?

I assure you, none of your numerous vassals can show a finer succession of *distant* prospects. For the home-view—ahem!—We must wait till the trees grow. Ever your Grace's truly faithful

W. SCOTT."

While the abortive negotiation as to the Exchequer was still pending, Scott was visited, for the first time since his childish years, with a painful illness, which proved the harbinger of a series of attacks, all nearly of the same kind, continued at short intervals during more than two years. Various letters, already introduced, have indicated how widely his habits of life when in Edinburgh differed from those of Abbotsford. They at all times did so to a great extent; but he had pushed his liberties with a most robust constitution to a perilous extreme while the affairs of the Ballantynes were labouring, and he was now to pay the penalty.

The first serious alarm occurred towards the close of a merry dinner party in Castle Street (on the 5th of March), when Scott suddenly sustained such exquisite torture from cramp in the stomach, that his masculine powers of endurance gave way, and he retired from the room with a scream of agony which electrified his guests. This scene was often repeated, as we shall see presently. His friends in Edinburgh continued all that spring in great anxiety on his account. Scarcely, however, had the first symptoms yielded to severe medical treatment, than he is found to have beguiled the intervals of his suffering by planning a dramatic piece on a story supplied to him by one of Train's communications, which he desired to present to Terry on behalf of the actor's first-born son, who had been christened by the name of Walter Scott Terry.*

---

* This young gentleman is now an officer in the East India Company's army.

Such was the origin of "the Fortunes of Devorgoil"—a piece which, though completed soon afterwards, and submitted by Terry to many manipulations with a view to the stage, was never received by any manager, and was first published, towards the close of the author's life, under the title, slightly altered for an obvious reason, of "the Doom of Devorgoil." The sketch of the story which he gives in the following letter will probably be considered by many besides myself as well worth the drama. It appears that the actor had mentioned to Scott his intention of *Terryfying* "the Black Dwarf."

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Edinburgh, 12th March, 1817.

"Dear Terry,

"I am now able to write to you on your own affairs, though still as weak as water from the operations of the medical faculty, who, I think, treated me as a recusant to their authority, and having me once at advantage, were determined I should not have strength to rebel again in a hurry. After all, I believe it was touch and go; and considering how much I have to do for my own family and others, my elegy might have been that of the Auld Man's Mare—

'The peats and turf are all to lead,
What ail'd the beast to die?'

You don't mention the nature of your undertaking in your last, and in your former you spoke both of the Black Dwarf and of Triermain. I have some doubts whether the town will endure a second time the following up a well-known tale with a dramatic representation—and there is no *vis comica* to redeem the Black Dwarf, as in the case of Dominie Sampson. I have thought of two subjects for you, if, like the Archbishop's homilies, they do not smell of the apoplexy. The first is a noble and very dramatic tradition preserved in Galloway, which runs briefly thus:—The Barons of Plenton (the family name, I think, was——by Jupiter, forgot!) boasted of great antiquity, and formerly of extensive power and wealth, to which the ruins of their huge castle, situated on an inland loch, still bear witness. In the middle of the seventeenth century, it is said, these ruins were still inhabited by the lineal descendant of this powerful family. But the ruinous halls and towers of his ancestors were all that had descended to him, and he cultivated the garden of the castle, and sold its fruits for a subsistence. He married in a line suitable rather to his present situation than the dignity of his descent, and was quite sunk into the rank of peasantry, excepting that he was still called—more in mockery, or at least in familiarity, than in respect—the Baron of Plenton. A causeway connected the castle with the mainland; it was cut in the middle, and the moat only passable by a drawbridge which yet subsisted, and which the poor old couple contrived to raise every night by their joint efforts, the country being very unsettled at the time. It must be observed, that the old man and his wife occupied only one apartment in the extensive ruins, a small one adjoining to the drawbridge; the rest was waste and dilapidated. As they were about to retire one night to rest, they were deterred by a sudden storm, which, rising in the wildest manner possible, threatened to bury them under the ruins of the castle. While they listened in terror to the complicated sounds of thunder, wind, and rain, they were astonished to hear the clang of hoofs on the causeway, and the voices of people clamouring for admittance. This was a request not rashly to be granted. The couple looked out, and dimly discerned through the storm that the causeway was crowded with riders. 'How many of you are there?' demanded John.—'Not more than the hall will hold,' was the answer; 'but open the gate, lower the bridge, and do not keep the *ladies* in the rain.'—John's heart was melted for the *ladies*, and, against his wife's advice, he undid the bolts, sunk the drawbridge, and bade them enter in the name of God. Having done so, he instantly retired into his *sanctum sanctorum* to await the event, for there was something in the voices and language of his guests that sounded mysterious and awful. They rushed into the castle, and appeared to know their way through all its recesses. Grooms were heard hurrying their horses to the stables—sentinels were heard mounting guard—a thousand lights gleamed from place to place through the ruins, till at length they seemed all concentrated in the baronial hall, whose range of broad windows threw a resplendent illumination on the moss-grown court below. After a short time, a domestic, clad in a rich but very antique dress, appeared before the old couple, and commanded them to attend his lord and lady in the great hall. They went with tottering steps, and to their great terror found themselves in the midst of a most brilliant and joyous company; but the fearful part of it was, that most of the guests resembled the ancestors of John's family, and were known to him by their resemblance to pictures which mouldered in the castle, or by traditionary description. At the head, the founder of the race, dressed like some mighty baron, or rather some Galwegian prince, sat with his lady. There was a difference of opinion between these ghostly personages concerning our honest John. The chief was inclined to receive him graciously; the lady considered him, from his mean marriage, as utterly unworthy of their name and board. The upshot is, that the chief discovers to his descendant the means of finding a huge treasure concealed in the castle; the lady assures him that the discovery shall never avail him. In the morning no trace can be discovered of the singular personages who had occupied the hall. But John sought for and discovered the vault where the spoils of the Southrons were concealed, rolled away the covering stone, and feasted his eyes on a range of massy chests of iron, filled doubtless with treasure. As he deliberated on the best means of bringing them up, and descending into the vault, he observed it began slowly to fill with water. Baling and pumping were resorted to, and when he had exhausted his own and his wife's strength, they summoned the assistance of the neighbourhood. But the vengeance of the visionary lady was perfect; the waters of the lake had forced their way into the vault, and John, after a year or two spent in draining and so forth, died broken-hearted, the last baron of Plenton.

"Such is the tale, of which the incidents seem new, and the interest capable of being rendered striking; the story admits of the highest degree of decoration, both by poetry, music, and scenery, and I propose (in behalf of my godson) to take some pains in dramatizing it. As thus—you shall play John, as you can speak a little Scotch; I will make him what the Baron of Bradwardine would have been in his circumstances, and he shall be alternately ludicrous from his family pride and prejudices, contrasted with his poverty, and respectable from his just and independent tone of feeling and character. I think Scotland is entitled to have something on the stage to balance Macklin's two worthies.* You understand the dialect will be only tinged with the national dialect—not that the baron is to speak broad Scotch, while all the others talk English. His wife and he shall have one child, a daughter, suitored unto by the conceited young parson or schoolmaster of the village, whose addresses are countenanced by her mother—and by Halbert the hunter, a youth of unknown descent. Now this youth shall be the rightful heir and representative of the English owners of the treasure, of which they had been robbed by the baron's ancestors, for which unjust act their spirits still walked the earth. These, with a substantial character or two, and the ghostly personages, shall mingle as they may—and the discovery of the youth's birth shall break the spell of the treasure-chamber. I will make the ghosts talk as never ghosts talked in the body or out of it; and the music may be as unearthly as you can get it. The rush of the shadows into the castle shall be seen through the window of the baron's apartment in the flat scene. The ghosts' banquet, and many other circumstances, may give great exercise to the scene-painter and dresser. If you like this plan, you had better suspend any other for the present. In my opinion it has the infinite merit of being perfectly new in plot and structure, and I will set about the sketch as soon as my strength is restored in some measure by air and exercise. I am sure I can finish it in a fortnight then. Ever yours truly, W. SCOTT."

---

* Sir Archy Mac-Sarcasm and Sir Pertinax Mac-Sycophant.

About the time when this letter was written, a newspaper paragraph having excited the apprehension of two —or I should say three—of his dearest friends that his life was in actual danger, Scott wrote to them as follows—

To John B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Portland Place, London.

"Edinburgh, 20th March, 1817.

"My dear Morritt,

"I hasten to acquaint you that I am in the land of life, and thriving, though I have had a slight shake, and still feel the consequences of medical treatment. I had been plagued all through this winter with cramps in my stomach, which I endured as a man of mould might, and endeavoured to combat them by drinking scalding water, and so forth. As they grew rather unpleasantly frequent, I had reluctant recourse to Baillie. But before his answer arrived, on the 5th, I had a most violent attack, which broke up a small party at my house, and sent me to bed roaring like a bull-calf. All sorts of remedies were applied, as in the case of Gil Blas' pretended colic, but such was the pain of the real disorder, that it out-deviled the Doctor hollow. Even heated salt, which was applied in such a state that it burned my shirt to rags, I hardly felt when clapped to my stomach. At length the symptoms became inflammatory, and dangerously so, the seat being the diaphragm. They only gave way to very profuse bleeding and blistering, which, under higher assistance, saved my life. My recovery was slow and tedious from the state of exhaustion. I could neither stir for weakness and giddiness, nor read for dazzling in my eyes, nor listen for a whizzing sound in my ears, nor even think for lack of the power of arranging my ideas. So I had a comfortless time of it for about a week. Even yet I by no means feel, as the copy-book hath it,

'The lion bold, which the lamb doth hold—'

on the contrary, I am as weak as water. They tell me (of course) I must renounce every creature comfort, as my friend Jedediah calls it. As for dinner and so forth, I care little about it—but toast and water, and three glasses of wine, sound like hard laws to me. However, to parody the lamentation of Hassan, the camel-driver,

'The lily health outvies the grape's bright ray,
And life is dearer than the usquebæ—'

so I shall be amenable to discipline. But in my own secret mind I suspect the state of my bowels more than any thing else. I take enough of exercise and enough of rest; but unluckily they are like a Lapland year, divided as one night and one day. In the vacation I never sit down; in the session-time I seldom rise up. But all this must be better arranged in future; and I trust I shall live to weary out all your kindness.

" I am obliged to break off hastily. I trust I shall be able to get over the Fell in the end of summer, which will rejoice me much, for the sound of the woods of Rokeby is lovely in mine ear. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Mrs Maclean Clephane, of Torloisk, Mull.

" Edinburgh, 23d March, 1817.

" My dear Mrs and Miss Clephane,

" Here comes to let you know you had nearly seen the last sight of me, unless I had come to visit you on my red beam, like one of Fingal's heroes, which, Ossianic as you are, I trow you would readily dispense with. The cause was a cramp in my stomach, which, after various painful visits, as if it had been sent by Prospero, and had mistaken me for Caliban, at length chose to conclude by setting fire to its lodging, like the Frenchmen as they retreated through Russia, and placed me in as proper a state of inflammation as if I had had the whole Spafields' committee in my unfortunate stomach. Then bleeding and blistering was the word; and they bled and blistered till they left me neither skin nor blood. However, they beat off the foul fiend, and I am bound to praise the bridge which carried me over. I am still very totterish, and very giddy, kept to panada, or rather to porridge, for I spurned at all foreign slops, and adhered to our ancient oatmeal manufacture. But I have no apprehension of any return of the serious part of the malady, and I am now recovering my strength, though looking somewhat cadaverous upon the occasion.

"I much approve of your going to Italy by sea; indeed it is the only way you ought to think of it. I am only sorry you are going to leave us for a while; but indeed the isle of Mull might be Florence to me in respect of separation, and cannot be quite Florence to you, since Lady Compton is not there. I lately heard her mentioned in a company where my interest in her was not known, as one of the very few English ladies now in Italy whom their acquirements, conduct, and mode of managing time, induce that part of foreign society, whose approbation is valuable, to consider with high respect and esteem. This I think is very likely; for, whatever folks say of foreigners, those of good education and high rank among them, must have a supreme contempt for the frivolous, dissatisfied, empty, gad-about manners of many of our modern belles. And we may say among ourselves, that there are few upon whom high accomplishments and information sit more gracefully.

"John Kemble is here to take leave, acting over all his great characters, and with all the spirit of his best years. He played Coriolanus last night (the first time I have ventured out), fully as well as I ever saw him; and you know what a complete model he is of the Roman. He has made a great reformation in his habits; given up wine, which he used to swallow by pailfulls,—and renewed his youth like the eagles. He seems to me always to play best those characters in which there is a predominating tinge of some over-mastering passion, or acquired habit of acting and speaking, colouring the whole man. The patrician pride of Coriolanus, the stoicism of Brutus and Cato, the rapid and hurried vehemence of Hotspur, mark the class of characters I mean. But he fails where a ready and pliable yielding to the events and passions of life makes what may be termed a more natural personage. Accordingly I think his Macbeth, Lear, and especially his Richard, inferior in spirit and truth. In Hamlet the natural fixed melancholy of the prince places him within Kemble's range;—yet many delicate and sudden turns of passion slip through his fingers. He is a lordly vessel, goodly and magnificent when going large before the wind, but wanting the facility to go '*ready about*,' so that he is sometimes among the breakers before he can wear ship. Yet we lose in him a most excellent critic, an accomplished scholar, and one who graced our forlorn drama with what little it has left of good sense and gentlemanlike feeling. And so exit he. He made me write some lines to speak when he withdraws, and he has been here criticising and correcting till he got them quite to his mind, which has rather tired me. Most truly yours while

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 29th of March, 1817, John Philip Kemble, after going through the round of his chief parts, to the delight of the Edinburgh audience, took his final leave of them as *Macbeth*, and in the costume of that character delivered a farewell address, penned for him by Scott.*

---

* See Poetical Works, vol. xi. p. 348. Scott's Farewell for Kemble first appeared in "The Sale-Room," for April 5th, 1817; and in the introductory note, James Ballantyne says,—"The character fixed upon, with happy propriety, for Kemble's closing scene, was Macbeth. He had laboured under a severe cold for a few days before, but on the memorable night the physical annoyance yielded to the energy of his mind. 'He was,' he said, in the Green-room, immediately before the curtain rose, 'determined to leave behind him the most perfect specimen of his art which he had ever shown;' and his success was complete. At the moment of the tyrant's death

No one who witnessed that scene, and heard the lines as then recited, can ever expect to be again interested to the same extent by any thing occurring within the walls of a theatre; nor was I ever present at any public dinner in all its circumstances more impressive, than was that which occurred a few days afterwards, when Kemble's Scotch friends and admirers assembled round him—Francis Jeffrey being chairman, Walter Scott and John Wilson the croupiers.

Shortly before this time Mr William Laidlaw had met with misfortunes, which rendered it necessary for him to give up the lease of a farm, on which he had been for some years settled, in Mid-Lothian. He was now anxiously looking about him for some new establishment, and it occurred to Scott that it might be mutually advantageous, as well as agreeable, if his excellent friend would consent to come and occupy a house on his property, and endeavour, under his guidance, to make such literary exertions as might raise his income to an amount adequate for his comfort. The prospect of obtaining such a neighbour was, no doubt, the more welcome to "Abbotsford and Kaeside," from its opening at this period of fluctuating health; and Laidlaw, who had for twenty years loved and revered him, considered the proposal

the curtain fell by the universal acclamation of the audience. The applauses were vehement and prolonged; they ceased—were resumed—rose again—were reiterated—and again were hushed. In a few minutes the curtain ascended, and Mr Kemble came forward in the dress of Macbeth (the audience by a consentaneous movement rising to receive him), to deliver his *farewell*." . . . "Mr Kemble delivered the lines with exquisite beauty, and with an effect that was evidenced by the tears and sobs of many of the audience. His own emotions were very conspicuous. When his farewell was closed he lingered long on the stage, as if unable to retire. The house again stood up, and cheered him with the waving of hats and long shouts of applause."

with far greater delight than the most lucrative appointment on any noble domain in the island could have afforded him. Though possessed of a lively and searching sagacity as to things in general, he had always been as to his own worldly interests simple as a child. His tastes and habits were all modest; and when he looked forward to spending the remainder of what had not hitherto been a successful life, under the shadow of the genius that he had worshipped almost from boyhood, his gentle heart was all happiness. He surveyed with glistening eyes the humble cottage in which his friend proposed to lodge him, his wife, and his little ones, and said to himself that he should write no more sad songs on *Forest Flittings.*[*]

Scott's notes to him at this time afford a truly charming picture of thoughtful and respectful delicacy on both sides. Mr Laidlaw, for example, appears to have hinted that he feared his friend, in making the proposal as to the house at Kaeside, might have perhaps in some degree overlooked the feelings of "Laird Moss," who, having sold his land several months before, had as yet continued to occupy his old homestead. Scott answers:—

To Mr W. Laidlaw.

"Edinburgh, April 5, 1817.

"My dear Sir,

"Nothing can give me more pleasure than the prospect of your making yourself comfortable at Kaeside till some good thing casts up. I have not put Mr Moss to any inconvenience, for I only requested an answer, giving him leave to sit if he had a mind—and of free will he leaves my premises void and redd at Whitsunday. I suspect the house is not in good order, but we shall get it brushed up a little. Without affectation I consider myself the obliged party in this matter—or at any rate it is a mutual benefit, and you shall have grass for a cow, and so forth—whatever you want. I am sure when you are so near I shall find some literary labour for you that will make ends meet. Yours, in haste,

---

[*] Mr Laidlaw has not published many verses; but his song of "Lucy's Flitting"—a simple and pathetic picture of a poor Ettrick maiden's feelings in leaving a service where she had been happy—has long been and must ever be a favourite with all who understand the delicacies of the Scottish dialect, and the manners of the district in which the scene is laid.

W. Scott."

He had before this time made considerable progress in another historical sketch (that of the year 1815) for the Edinburgh Annual Register; and the first literary labour which he provided for Laidlaw, appears to have been arranging for the same volume a set of newspaper articles, usually printed under the head of *Chronicle*, to which were appended some little extracts of new books of travels, and the like miscellanies. The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine, subsequently known by the name of its projector, Blackwood, commenced in April of this year; and one of its editors, Mr Thomas Pringle, being a Teviotdale man and an old acquaintance of Laidlaw's, offered to the latter the care of its *Chronicle department* also,—not perhaps without calculating that, in case Laidlaw's connexion with the new journal should become at all a strict one, Scott would be induced to give it occasionally the benefit of his own literary assistance. He accordingly did not write—being unwell at the time—but *dictated* to Pringle a collection of anecdotes concerning Scottish gypsies, which attracted a good deal of notice;* and, I believe, he also assisted Laidlaw in drawing up one or more articles on the subject of Scottish superstitions. But the bookseller and Pringle soon quarrelled, and, the Magazine assuming, on the retirement of the latter, a high Tory character, Laidlaw's Whig feelings induced him to renounce its alliance; while Scott, having no kindness for Blackwood personally, and disapproving (though he chuckled over it) the reckless extravagance of juvenile satire, which, by and by, distinguished his journal, appears to have easily acquiesced in the propriety of Laidlaw's determination. I insert mean time a few notes, which will show with what care and kindness he watched over Laidlaw's operations for the Annual Register.

---

* These anecdotes were subsequently inserted in the Introduction to Guy Mannering.

To Mr Laidlaw, at Kaeside.

Edinburgh, June, 16, 1817.

"Dear Sir,

"I enclose you 'rare guerdon,' better than remuneration,—namely, a cheque for L.25, for the Chronicle part of the Register. The incidents selected should have some reference to amusement as well as information, and may be occasionally abridged in the narration; but, after all, paste and scissors form your principal materials. You must look out for two or three good original articles; and, if you would read and take pains to abridge one or two curious books of travels, I would send out the volumes. Could I once get the head of the concern fairly round before the wind again, I am sure I could make it L.100 a-year to you. In the present instance it will be at least L.50. Yours truly,

W. S."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, July 8, 1817.

"My dear Sir,

"I send you Adam's and Riley's Travels. You will observe I don't want a review of the books, or a detail of these persons' adventures, but merely a short article expressing the light, direct or doubtful, which they have thrown on the interior of Africa. 'Recent Discoveries in Africa,' will be a proper title. I hope to find you materially amended, or rather quite stout, when I come out on Saturday. I am quite well this morning. Yours, in haste,

W. S.

"P. S.—I add Mariner's Tonga Islands and Campbell's Voyage. Pray, take great care of them, as I am a coxcomb about my books, and hate specks or spots. Take care of yourself, and want for nothing that Abbotsford can furnish."

These notes have carried us down to the middle of the year. But I must now turn to some others which show that before Whitsuntide, when Laidlaw settled at Kaeside, negotiations were on foot respecting another novel.

To Mr John Ballantyne, Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, Monday. [April, 1817.]

"Dear John,

"I have a good subject for a work of fiction *in petto*. What do you think Constable would give for a smell of it? You ran away without taking leave the other morning, or I wished to have spoken to you about it. I don't mean a continuation of Jedediah, because there might be some delicacy in putting that by the original publishers. You may write if any thing occurs to you on this subject. It will not interrupt my History. By the way, I have a great lot of the Register ready for delivery, and no man asks for it. I shall want to pay up some cash at Whitsunday, which will make me draw on my brains. Yours truly,

W. SCOTT."

To the Same.

" Abbotsford, Saturday, May 3, 1817.

" Dear John,

" I shall be much obliged to you to come here with Constable on Monday, as he proposes a visit, and it will save time. By the way, you must attend that the usual quantity of stock is included in the arrangement—that is L.600 for 6000 copies. My sum is L.1700, payable in May—a round advance, by'r Lady, but I think I am entitled to it, considering what I have twined off hitherto on such occasions.

" I make a point on your coming with Constable, health allowing. Yours truly,

W. S."

The result of this meeting is indicated in a note scribbled by John Ballantyne at the bottom of the foregoing letter, before it was seen by his brother the printer—

" Half-past 3 o'clock, Tuesday.

" Dear James,

" I am this moment returned from Abbotsford, with entire and full success. Wish me joy. I shall gain above L.600—Constable taking my share of stock also. The title is *Rob Roy—by the author of Waverley!!!* Keep this letter for me. J. B."

On the same page there is written, in fresher ink, which marks, no doubt, the time when John pasted it into his collection of private papers now before me—

"N.B.—I did gain above L.1200.—J. B."

The title of this novel was suggested by Constable, and he told me years afterwards the difficulty he had to get it adopted by the author. "What!" said he, "Mr Accoucheur, must you be setting up for Mr Sponsor too?—but let's hear it." Constable said the name of the real hero would be the best possible name for the book. "Nay," answered Scott, "never let me have to write up to a name. You well know I have generally adopted a title that told nothing."—The bookseller, however, persevered; and after the trio had dined, these scruples gave way.

On rising from table, according to Constable, they sallied out to the green before the door of the cottage, and all in the highest spirits enjoyed the fine May evening. John Ballantyne, hopping up and down in his glee, exclaimed, "is Rob's gun here, Mr Scott; would you object to my trying the auld barrel with a *few de joy?*" "Nay, Mr Puff," said Scott, "it would burst and blow you to the devil before your time." "Johnny, my man," said Constable, "what the mischief puts drawing at sight into *your* head?" Scott laughed heartily at this innuendo; and then observing that the little man felt somewhat sore, called attention to the notes of a bird in the adjoining shrubbery. "And by the by," said he, as they continued listening, "'tis a long time, Johnny, since we have had the Cobbler of Kelso." Mr Puff forthwith jumped up on a mass of stone, and seating himself in the proper attitude of one working with his awl, began a favourite interlude, mimicking a certain son of Crispin, at whose stall Scott and he had often lingered when they were schoolboys, and a blackbird, the only companion of his cell, that used to sing to him, while he talked and whistled to it all day long. With this performance Scott was always delighted: nothing could be richer than the contrast of the bird's wild sweet notes, some of which he imitated with wonderful skill, and the accompaniment of the Cobbler's hoarse cracked voice, uttering all manner of endearing epithets, which Johnny multiplied and varied in a style worthy of the Old Women in Rabelais at the birth of Pantagruel. I often wondered that Matthews, who borrowed so many good things from John Ballantyne, allowed this Cobbler, which was certainly the masterpiece, to escape him.

Scott himself had probably exceeded that evening the three glasses of wine sanctioned by his Sangrados. "I never," said Constable, "had found him so disposed to be communicative about what he meant to do. Though he had had a return of his illness but the day before, he continued for an hour or more to walk backwards and forwards on the green, talking and laughing —he told us he was sure he should make a hit in a Glasgow weaver, whom he would *ravel up with Rob;* and fairly outshone the Cobbler, in an extempore dialogue between the bailie and the cateran—something not unlike what the book gives us as passing in the Glasgow tolbooth."

Mr Puff might well exult in the "full and entire success" of this trip to Abbotsford. His friend had made it a *sine qua non* in the bargain with Constable, that he should have a third share in the bookseller's moiety of the copyright—and though Johnny had no more trouble about the publishing or selling of Rob Roy than his own Cobbler of Kelso, this stipulation had secured him a *bonus* of L.1200, before two years passed. Moreover, one must admire his adroitness in persuading Constable, during their journey back to Edinburgh, to relieve him of that fraction of his own old stock, with which his unhazardous share in the new bargain was burdened. Scott's kindness continued as long as John Ballantyne lived to provide for him a constant succession of similar advantages at the same easy rate; and Constable, from deference to Scott's wishes, and from his own liking for the humorous auctioneer, appears to have submitted with hardly a momentary grudge to this heavy tax on his most important ventures.

The same week Scott received Southey's celebrated letter to Mr William Smith, M.P. for Norwich. The poet of Keswick had also forwarded to him somewhat earlier his Pilgrimage to Waterloo, which piece contains a touching allusion to the affliction the author had recently sustained in the death of a fine boy. Scott's letter on this occasion was as follows:—

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Selkirk, May 9th, 1817.

"My dear Southey,

"I have been a strangely negligent correspondent for some months past, more especially as I have had you rarely out of my thoughts, for I think you will hardly doubt of my sincere sympathy in events which have happened since I have written. I shed sincere tears over the Pilgrimage to Waterloo. But in the crucible of human life, the purest gold is tried by the strongest heat, and I can only hope for the continuance of your present family blessings to one so well formed to enjoy the pure happiness they afford. My health has, of late, been very indifferent. I was very nearly succumbing under a violent inflammatory attack, and still feel the effects of the necessary treatment. I believe they took one-third of the blood of my system, and blistered in proportion; so that both my flesh and my blood have been in a wofully reduced state. I got out here some weeks since, where, by dint of the insensible exercise which one takes in the country, I feel myself gathering strength daily, but am still obliged to observe a severe regimen. It was not to croak about myself, however, that I took up the pen, but to wish you joy of your triumphant answer to that coarse-minded William Smith. He deserved all he has got, and, to say the truth, you do not spare him, and have no cause. His attack seems to have proceeded from the vulgar insolence of a low mind desirous of attacking genius at disadvantage. It is the ancient and eternal strife of which the witch speaks in Thalaba. Such a man as he feels he has no alliance with such as you, and his evil instincts lead him to treat as hostile whatever he cannot comprehend. I met Smith once during his stay in Edinburgh,* and had, what I seldom have with any one in society, a high quarrel with him. His mode of travelling had been from one gentleman's seat to another, abusing the well-known hospitality of the Highland lairds by taking possession of their houses, even during their absence, domineering in them when they were present, and not only eating the dinner of to-day, but requiring that the dinner of to-morrow should also be made ready and carried forward with him, to save the expense of inns. All this was no business of mine, but when, in the middle of a company consisting of those to whom he had owed this hospitality, he abused the country, of which he knew little—the language, of which he knew nothing—and the people, who have their faults, but are a much more harmless, moral, and at the same time high-spirited population than, I venture to say, he ever lived amongst—I thought it was really too bad, and so e'en took up the debate, and gave it him over the knuckles as smartly as I could. Your pamphlet, therefore, fed fat my ancient grudge against him as well as the modern one, for you cannot doubt that my blood boiled at reading the report of his speech. Enough of this gentleman, who, I think, will not walk out of the round in a hurry again, to slander the conduct of individuals.

---

* Scott's meeting with this Mr Smith occurred at the table of his friend and colleague, Hector Macdonald Buchanan. The company, except Scott and Smith, were all, like their hospitable landlord, Highlanders.

"I am at present writing at our head-court of freeholders—a set of quiet, unpretending, but sound-judging country gentlemen, and whose opinions may be very well taken as a fair specimen of those men of sense and honour, who are not likely to be dazzled by literary talent, which lies out of their beat, and who, therefore, cannot be of partial counsel in the cause; and I never heard an opinion more generally, and even warmly expressed, than that your triumphant vindication brands Smith as a slanderer in all time coming. I think you may not be displeased to know this, because what men of keen feelings and literary pursuits must have felt cannot be unknown to you, and you may not have the same access to know the impression made upon the general class of society.

"I have to thank you for the continuation of the History of Brazil—one of your gigantic labours; the fruit of a mind so active, yet so patient of labour. I am not yet far advanced in the second volume, reserving it usually for my hour's amusement in the evening, as children keep their dainties for *bonne bouche:* but as far as I have come, it possesses all the interest of the commencement, though a more faithless and worthless set than both Dutch and Portuguese I have never read of; and it requires your knowledge of the springs of human action, and your lively description of 'hair-breadth 'scapes,' to make one care whether the hog bites the dog, or the dog bites the hog. Both nations were in rapid declension from their short-lived age of heroism, and in the act of experiencing all those retrograde movements which are the natural consequence of selfishness on the one hand, and bigotry on the other.

"I am glad to see you are turning your mind to the state of the poor. Should you enter into details on the subject of the best mode of assisting them, I would be happy to tell you the few observations I have made—not on a very small scale neither, considering my fortune, for I have kept about thirty of the labourers in my neighbourhood in constant employment this winter. This I do not call charity, because they executed some extensive plantations and other works, which I could never have got done so cheaply, and which I always intended one day to do. But neither was it altogether selfish on my part, because I was putting myself to inconvenience in incurring the expense of several years at once, and certainly would not have done so, but to serve mine honest neighbours, who were likely to want work but for such exertion. From my observation, I am inclined greatly to doubt the salutary effect of the scheme generally adopted in Edinburgh and elsewhere for relieving the poor. At Edinburgh, they are employed on public works at so much a-day—tenpence, I believe, or one shilling, with an advance to those who have families. This rate is fixed below that of ordinary wages, in order that no person may be employed but those who really cannot find work elsewhere. But it is attended with this bad effect, that the people regard it partly as charity, which is humiliating,—and partly as an imposition, in taking their labour below its usual saleable value; to which many add a third view of the subject—namely, that this sort of half-pay is not given them for the purpose of working, but to prevent their rising in rebellion. None of these misconceptions are favourable to hard labour, and the consequence is, that I never have seen such a set of idle *fainéants* as those employed on this system in the public works, and I am sure that, notwithstanding the very laudable intention of those who subscribed to form the fund, and the yet more praiseworthy, because more difficult, exertions of those who superintend it, the issue of the scheme will occasion full as much mischief as good to the people engaged in it. Private gentlemen, acting on something like a similar system, may make it answer better, because they have not the lazy dross of a metropolis to contend with—because they have fewer hands to manage—and above all, because an individual always manages his own concerns better than those of the country can be managed. Yet all who have employed those who were distressed for want of work at under wages, have had, less or more, similar complaints to make. I think I have avoided this in my own case, by inviting the country-people to do piece-work by the contract. Two things only are necessary—one is, that the nature of the work should be such as will admit of its being ascertained, when finished, to have been substantially executed. All sort of spade-work and hoe-work, with many other kinds of country labour, fall under this description, and the employer can hardly be cheated in the execution, if he keeps a reasonable look out. The other point is to take care that the undertakers, in their anxiety for employment, do not take the job too cheap. A little acquaintance with country labour will enable one to regulate this; but it is an essential point, for if you do not keep them to their bargain, it is making a jest of the thing, and forfeiting the very advantage you have in view—that, namely, of inducing the labourer to bring his heart and spirit to his work. But this he will do where he has a fair bargain, which is to prove a good or bad one according to his own exertions. In this case you make the poor man his own friend, for the profits of his good conduct are all his own. It is astonishing how partial the people are to this species of contract, and how diligently they labour, acquiring or maintaining all the while those habits which renders them honourable and useful members of society. I mention this to you, because the rich, much to their honour, do not, in general, require to be so much stimulated to benevolence, as to be directed in the most useful way to exert it.

"I have still a word to say about the poor of our own parish of Parnassus. I have been applied to by a very worthy friend, Mr Scott of Sinton, in behalf of an unfortunate Mr Gilmour, who, it seems, has expended a little fortune in printing, upon his own account, poems which, from the sample I saw, seem exactly to answer the description of Dean Swift's country house—

'Too bad for a blessing, too good for a curse,
I wish from my soul they were better or worse."

But you are the dean of our corporation, and, I am informed, take some interest in this poor gentleman. If you can point out any way in which I can serve him, I am sure my inclination is not wanting, but it looks like a very hopeless case. I beg my kindest respects to Mrs Southey, and am always sincerely and affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

About this time Hogg took possession of Altrive Lake, and some of his friends in Edinburgh set on foot a subscription edition of his Queen's Wake (at a guinea each copy), in the hope of thus raising a sum adequate to the stocking of the little farm. The following letter alludes to this affair; and also to the death of Frances Lady Douglas, sister to Duke Henry of Buccleuch, whose early kindness to Scott has been more than once mentioned.

To the Right Honourable Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.

"Abbotsford, June 8, 1817.

"My dear Lord,

"I am honoured with your letter, and will not fail to take care that the Shepherd profits by your kind intentions, and those of Lady Montagu. This is a scheme which I did not devise, for I fear it will end in disappointment, but for which I have done, and will do all I possibly can. There is an old saying of the seamen's, 'every man is not born to be a boatswain,' and I think I have heard of men born under a sixpenny planet, and doomed never to be worth a groat. I fear something of this vile sixpenny influence had gleamed in at the cottage window when poor Hogg first came squeaking into the world. All that he made by his original book he ventured on a flock of sheep to drive into the Highlands to a farm he had taken there, but of which he could not get possession, so that all the stock was ruined and sold to disadvantage. Then he tried another farm, which proved too dear, so that he fairly broke upon it. Then put forth divers publications, which had little sale—and brought him accordingly few pence, though some praise. Then came this Queen's Wake, by which he might and ought to have made from L.100 to L.200—for there were, I think, three editions—when lo! his bookseller turned bankrupt, and paid him never a penny. The Duke has now, with his wonted generosity, given him a cosie bield, and the object of the present attack upon the public, is to get if possible as much cash together as will stock it. But no one has loose guineas now to give to poor poets, and I greatly doubt the scheme succeeding, unless it is more strongly patronised than can almost be expected. In bookselling matters, an author must either be the conjuror, who commands the devil, or the witch who serves him—and few are they whose situation is sufficiently independent to enable them to assume the higher character—and this is injurious to the indigent author in every respect, for not only is he obliged to turn his pen to every various kind of composition, and so to injure himself with the public by writing hastily, and on subjects unfitted for his genius; but moreover, those honest gentlemen, the booksellers, from a natural association, consider the books as of least value, which they find they can get at least expense of copy-money, and therefore are proportionally careless in pushing the sale of the work. Whereas a good round sum out of their purse, like a moderate rise of rent on a farm, raises the work thus acquired in their own eyes, and serves as a spur to make them clear away every channel, by which they can discharge their quires upon the public. So much for bookselling, the most ticklish and unsafe, and hazardous of all professions, scarcely with the exception of horse-jockeyship.

"You cannot doubt the sincere interest I take in Lady Montagu's health. I was very glad to learn from the Duke, that the late melancholy event had produced no permanent effect on her constitution, as I know how much her heart must have suffered.* I saw our regretted friend for the last time at the Theatre, and made many schemes to be at Bothwell this next July. But thus the world glides from us, and those we most love and honour are withdrawn from the stage before us. I know not why it was that among the few for whom I had so much respectful regard, I never had associated the idea of early deprivation with Lady Douglas. Her excellent sense, deep information, and the wit which she wielded with so much good humour, were allied apparently to a healthy constitution which might have permitted us to enjoy, and be instructed by her society for many years. *Dis aliter visum*, and the recollection dwelling on all the delight which she afforded to society, and the good which she did in private life, is what now remains to us of her wit, wisdom, and benevolence. The Duke keeps his usual health, with always just so much of the gout, however, as would make me wish that he had more—a kind wish for which I do not observe that he is sufficiently grateful. I hope to spend a few days at Drumlanrig Castle, when that ancient mansion shall have so far limited its courtesy as to stand covered in the presence of the wind and rain, which I believe is not yet the case. I am no friend to ceremony, and like a house as well when it does not carry its roof *en chapeau bras*. I heartily wish your Lordship joy of the new mansion at Ditton, and hope my good stars will permit me to pay my respects there one day. The discovery of the niches certainly bodes good luck to the house of Montagu, and as there are three of them, I presume it is to come threefold. From the care with which they were concealed, I presume they had been closed in the days of Cromwell, or a little before, and that the artist employed (like the General, who told his soldiers to fight bravely against the Pope, since they were Venetians before they were Christians) had more professional than religious zeal, and did not even, according to the practice of the time, think it necessary to sweep away Popery with the besom of destruction.* I am here on a stolen visit of two days, and find my mansion gradually enlarging. Thanks to Mr Atkinson (who found out a practical use for our romantic theory), it promises to make a comfortable station for offering your Lordship and Lady Montagu a pilgrim's meal, when you next visit Melrose Abbey, and that without any risk of your valet (who I recollect is a substantial person) sticking between the wall of the parlour and the backs of the chairs placed round the table. This literally befel Sir Harry Macdougal's fat butler, who looked like a ship of the line in the loch at Bowhill, altogether unlike his master, who could glide wherever a weasel might make his way. Mr Atkinson has indeed been more attentive than I can express, when I consider how valuable his time must be.* We are attempting no castellated conundrums to rival those Lord Napier used to have executed in sugar, when he was Commissioner, and no cottage neither, but an irregular somewhat—like an old English hall, in which your squire of L.500 a-year used to drink his ale in days of yore.

---

* Lady Montagu was the daughter of the late Lord Douglas by his first marriage with Lady Lucy Grahame, daughter of the second Duke of Montrose.

---

* Lord Montagu's house at Ditton Park, near Windsor, had recently been destroyed by fire—and the ruins revealed some niches with antique candlesticks, &c., belonging to a domestic chapel that had been converted to other purposes from the time, I believe, of Henry VIII.

" I am making considerable plantations (that is considering), being greatly encouraged by the progress of those I formerly laid out. Read the veracious Gulliver's account of the Windsor Forest of Lilliput, and you will have some idea of the solemn gloom of my Druid shades.

Your Lordship's truly faithful
WALTER SCOTT.

" This is the 8th of June, and not an ash tree in leaf yet. The country cruelly backward, and whole fields destroyed by the grub. I dread this next season."

---

* Mr Atkinson, of St John's Wood, was the architect of Lord Montagu's new mansion at Ditton, as well as the artist ultimately employed in arranging Scott's interior at Abbotsford.

CHAPTER III.

EXCURSION TO THE LENNOX—GLASGOW—AND DRUMLANRIG—PURCHASE OF TOFTFIELD—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FERGUSON FAMILY AT HUNTLY BURN—LINES WRITTEN IN ILLNESS—VISITS OF WASHINGTON IRVING—LADY BYRON—AND SIR DAVID WILKIE—PROGRESS OF THE BUILDING AT ABBOTSFORD—LETTERS TO MORRITT—TERRY, &c.—CONCLUSION OF ROB ROY—

1817.

During the summer term of 1817, Scott seems to have laboured chiefly on his History of 1815, for the Register, which was published in August; but he also found time to draw up the Introduction for a richly embellished quarto, entitled "Border Antiquities," which came out a month later. This valuable essay, containing large additions to the information previously embodied in the Minstrelsy, has been included in the late collection of his Miscellaneous Prose, and has thus obtained a circulation not to be expected for it in the original costly form.

Upon the rising of the Court in July, he made an excursion to the Lennox, chiefly that he might visit a cave at the head of Loch Lomond, said to have been a favourite retreat of his hero, Rob Roy. He was accompanied to the seat of his friend, Mr Macdonald Buchanan, by Captain Adam Ferguson—the *long Linton* of the days of his apprenticeship; and thence to Glasgow, where, under the auspices of a kind and intelligent acquaintance, Mr John Smith, bookseller, he refreshed his recollection of the noble cathedral, and other localities of the birth-place of Bailie Jarvie. Mr Smith took care also to show the tourists the most remarkable novelties in the great manufacturing establishments of his flourishing city; and he remembers particularly the delight which Scott expressed on seeing the process of *singeing* muslin—that is, of divesting the finished web of all superficial knots and irregularities, by passing it, with the rapidity of lightning, over a rolling bar of red-hot iron. "The man that imagined this," said Scott, "was *the Shakspeare* of *the Wabsters*—

'Things out of hope are compass'd oft with vent'ring.'"

The following note indicates the next stages of his progress:—

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, Drumlanrig Castle.

"Sanquhar, 2 o'clock, July 30, 1817.

"From Ross, where the clouds on Ben-Lomond are sleeping—
From Greenock, where Clyde to the Ocean is sweeping—
From Largs, where the Scotch gave the Northmen a drilling—
From Ardrossan, whose harbour cost many a shilling—
From Old Cumnock, where beds are as hard as a plank, sir—
From a chop and green pease, and a chicken in Sanquhar,
This eve, please the Fates, at Drumlanrig we anchor.

W. S."

The Poet and Captain Ferguson remained a week at Drumlanrig, and thence repaired together to Abbotsford. By this time, the foundations of that part of the existing house, which extends from the hall westwards to the original court-yard, had been laid; and Scott now found a new source of constant occupation in watching the proceedings of his masons. He had, moreover, no lack of employment further a-field,—for he was now negotiating with another neighbouring landowner for the purchase of an addition, of more consequence than any he had hitherto made, to his estate. In the course of the autumn he concluded this matter, and became, for the price of L.10,000, proprietor of the lands of *Toftfield*,* on which there had recently been erected a substantial mansion-house, fitted, in all points, for the accommodation of a genteel family. This circumstance offered a temptation which much quickened Scott's zeal for completing his arrangement. The venerable Professor Ferguson had died a year before; Captain Adam Ferguson was at home on half-pay; and Scott now saw the means of securing for himself, henceforth, the immediate neighbourhood of the companion of his youth, and his amiable sisters. Ferguson, who had written, from the lines of Torres Vedras, his hopes of finding, when the war should be over, some sheltering cottage upon the Tweed, within a walk of Abbotsford, was delighted to see his dreams realized; and the family took up their residence next spring at the new house of Toftfield, on which Scott then bestowed, at the ladies' request, the name of Huntly Burn:—this more harmonious designation being taken from the mountain brook which passes through its grounds and garden,—the same famous in tradition as the scene of Thomas the Rhymer's interviews with the Queen of Fairy. The upper part of the *Rhymer's Glen*, through which this brook finds its way from the Cauldshiels Loch to Toftfield, had been included in a previous purchase. He was now master of all these haunts of "True Thomas," and of the whole ground of the battle of Melrose from *Skirmish-Field* to *Turn-again*. His enjoyment of the new territories was, however, interrupted by various returns of his cramp, and the depression of spirit which always attended, in his case, the use of opium,—the only medicine that seemed to have power over the disease.

---

* On completing this purchase, Scott writes to John Ballantyne:—"Dear John,—I have closed with Usher for his beautiful patrimony, which makes me a great laird. I am afraid the people will take me up for coining. Indeed, these novels, while their attractions last, are something like it. I am very glad of *your* good prospects. Still I cry, *Prudence! Prudence!*—Yours truly, W. S."

It was while struggling with such languor, on one lovely evening of this autumn, that he composed the following beautiful verses. They mark the very spot of their birth,—namely, the then naked height overhanging the northern side of the Cauldshiels Loch, from which Melrose Abbey to the eastward, and the hills of Ettrick and Yarrow to the west, are now visible over a wide range of rich woodland,—all the work of the poet's hand:—

" The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill,
  In Ettrick's vale, is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still—
  The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
  Bears those bright hues that once it bore;
Though evening, with her richest dye,
  Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

" With listless look along the plain
  I see Tweed's silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
  Of Melrose rise in ruin'd pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air,
  The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,—
Are they still such as once they were,
  Or is the dreary change in me?

" Alas, the warp'd and broken board,
  How can it bear the painter's dye?
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord,
  How to the minstrel's skill reply!
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
  To feverish pulse each gale blows chill;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
  Were barren as this moorland hill."

He again alludes to his illness in a letter to Mr Morritt:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M.P. Rokeby.

"Abbotsford, Aug. 11, 1817.

"My dear Morritt,

"I am arrived from a little tour in the west of Scotland, and had hoped, in compliance with your kind wish, to have indulged myself with a skip over the Border as far as Rokeby, about the end of this month. But my fate denies me this pleasure; for, in consequence of one or two blunders, during my absence, in executing my new premises, I perceive the necessity of remaining at the helm while they are going on. Our masons, though excellent workmen, are too little accustomed to the gimcracks of their art, to be trusted with the execution of a *bravura* plan, without constant inspection. Besides, the said labourers lay me under the necessity of labouring a little myself; and I find I can no longer with impunity undertake to make one week's hard work supply the omissions of a fortnight's idleness. Like you, I have abridged my creature-comforts—as Old Mortality would call them—renouncing beer and ale on all ordinary occasions; also pastry, fruit, &c. and all that tends to acidity. These are awkward warnings; but *sat est vixisse.* To have lived respected and regarded by some of the best men in our age, is enough for an individual like me; the rest must be as God wills, and when he wills.

"The poor laws into which you have ventured for the love of the country, form a sad quagmire. They are like John Bunyan's Slough of Despond, into which, as he observes, millions of cart loads of good resolutions have been thrown, without perceptibly mending the way. From what you say, and from what I have heard from others, there is a very natural desire to trust to one or two empirical remedies, such as general systems of education, and so forth. But a man with a broken constitution might as well put faith in Spilsbury or Godbold. It is not the knowledge, but the use which is made of it, that is productive of real benefit. To say that the Scottish peasant is less likely than the Englishman to become an incumbrance on his parish, is saying, in other words, that this country is less populous,—that there are fewer villages and towns,—that the agricultural classes, from the landed proprietor down to the cottager, are individually more knit and cemented together;—above all, that the Scotch peasant has harder habits of life, and can endure from his infancy a worse fare and lodging than your parish almshouses offer. There is a terrible evil in England to which we are strangers,—the number, to-wit, of tippling houses, where the labourer, as a matter of course, spends the overplus of his earnings. In Scotland there are few; and the Justices are commendably inexorable in rejecting all application for licenses where there appears no public necessity for granting them. A man, therefore, cannot easily spend much money in liquor, since he must walk three or four miles to the place of suction and back again, which infers a sort of *malice prepense* of which few are capable; and the habitual opportunity of indulgence not being at hand, the habits of intemperance, and of waste connected with it, are not acquired. If financiers would admit a general limitation of the ale-houses over England to one-fourth of the number, I am convinced you would find the money spent in that manner would remain with the peasant, as a source of self-support and independence. All this applies chiefly to the country; in towns, and in the manufacturing districts, the evil could hardly be diminished by such regulations. There would, perhaps, be no means so effectual as that (which will never be listened to) of taxing the manufacturers according to the number of hands which they employ on an average, and applying the produce in maintaining the manufacturing poor. If it should be alleged that this would injure the manufacturers, I would boldly reply,—'And why not injure, or rather limit, speculations, the excessive stretch of which has been productive of so much damage to the principles of the country, and to the population, whom it has, in so many respects, degraded and demoralized?' For a great many years, manufactures, taken in a general point of view, have not partaken of the character of a regular profession, in which all who engaged with honest industry and a sufficient capital might reasonably expect returns proportional to their advances and labour —but have, on the contrary, rather resembled a lottery, in which the great majority of the adventurers are sure to be losers, although some may draw considerable advantage. Men continued for a great many years to exert themselves, and to pay extravagant wages, not in hopes that there could be a reasonable prospect of an orderly and regular demand for the goods they wrought up, but in order that they might be the first to take advantage of some casual opening which might consume their cargo, let others shift as they could. Hence extravagant wages on some occasions; for these adventurers who thus played at hit or miss, stood on no scruples while the chance of success remained open. Hence, also, the stoppage of work, and the discharge of the workmen, when the speculators failed of their object. All this while the country was the sufferer;—for whoever gained, the result, being upon the whole a loss, fell on the nation, together with the task of maintaining a poor, rendered effeminate and vicious by over-wages and over-living, and necessarily cast loose upon society. I cannot but think that the necessity of making some fund beforehand, for the provision of those whom they debauch, and render only fit for the almshouse, in prosecution of their own adventures, though it operated as a check on the increase of manufactures, would be a measure just in itself, and beneficial to the community. But it would never be listened to;—the weaver's beam, and the sons of Zeruiah, would be too many for the proposers.

"This is the eleventh of August; Walter, happier than he will ever be again, perhaps, is preparing for the moors. He has a better dog than Trout, and rather less active. Mrs Scott and all our family send kind love. Yours ever,

W. S."

Two or three days after this letter was written, Scott first saw Washington Irving, who has recorded his visit in a delightful Essay, which, however, having been penned nearly twenty years afterwards, betrays a good many slips of memory as to names and dates. Mr Irving says he arrived at Abbotsford on the 27th of August 1816; but he describes the walls of the new house as already overtopping the old cottage; and this is far from being the only circumstance he mentions which proves that he should have written 1817.* The picture which my amiable friend has drawn of his reception, shows to all who remember the Scott and the Abbotsford of those days, how consistent accuracy as to essentials may be with forgetfulness of trifles.

---

* I have before me two letters of Mr Irving's to Scott, both written in September 1817, from Edinburgh, and referring to his visit (which certainly was his only one at Abbotsford) as immediately preceding. There is also in my hands a letter from Scott to his friend John Richardson, of Fludyer Street, dated 22d September, 1817, in which he says, "When you see Tom Campbell, tell him, with my best love, that I have to thank him for making me known to Mr Washington Irving, who is one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I have made this many a day."

Scott had received "the History of New York by Knickerbocker," shortly after its appearance in 1812, from an accomplished American traveller, Mr Brevoort; and the admirable humour of this early work had led him to anticipate the brilliant career which its author has since run. Mr Thomas Campbell being no stranger to Scott's high estimation of Irving's genius, gave him a letter of introduction, which, halting his chaise on the high-road above Abbotsford, he modestly sent down to the house "with a card, on which he had written, that he was on his way to the ruins of Melrose, and wished to know whether it would be agreeable to Mr Scott to receive a visit from him in the course of the morning." Scott's family well remember the delight with which he received this announcement—he was at breakfast, and sallied forth instantly, dogs and children after him as usual, to greet the guest, and conduct him in person from the highway to the door.

> "The noise of my chaise," says Irving, "had disturbed the quiet of the establishment. Out sallied the warder of the castle, a black greyhound, and leaping on one of the blocks of stone, began a furious barking. This alarm brought out the whole garrison of dogs, all open-mouthed and vociferous. In a little while, the lord of the castle himself made his appearance. I knew him at once, by the likenesses that had been published of him. He came limping up the gravel walk, aiding himself by a stout walking-staff, but moving rapidly and with vigour. By his side jogged along a large iron-grey staghound, of most grave demeanour, who took no part in the clamour of the canine rabble, but seemed to consider himself bound, for the dignity of the house, to give me a courteous reception.
>
> "Before Scott reached the gate, he called out in a hearty tone, welcoming me to Abbotsford, and asking news of Campbell. Arrived at the door of the chaise, he grasped me warmly by the hand:

'Come, drive down, drive down to the house,' said he; 'ye're just in time for breakfast, and afterwards ye shall see all the wonders of the Abbey.

"I would have excused myself on the plea of having already made my breakfast. 'Hut, man,' cried he, 'a ride in the morning in the keen air of the Scotch hills is warrant enough for a second breakfast.'

"I was accordingly whirled to the portal of the cottage, and in a few moments found myself seated at the breakfast-table. There was no one present but the family, which consisted of Mrs Scott; her eldest daughter, Sophia, then a fine girl about seventeen; Miss Ann Scott, two or three years younger; Walter, a well-grown stripling; and Charles, a lively boy, eleven or twelve years of age.

"I soon felt myself quite at home, and my heart in a glow, with the cordial welcome I experienced. I had thought to make a mere morning visit, but found I was not to be let off so lightly. 'You must not think our neighbourhood is to be read in a morning like a newspaper,' said Scott; 'it takes several days of study for an observant traveller, that has a relish for auld-world trumpery. After breakfast you shall make your visit to Melrose Abbey; I shall not be able to accompany you, as I have some household affairs to attend to; but I will put you in charge of my son Charles, who is very learned in all things touching the old ruin and the neighbourhood it stands in; and he and my friend Johnnie Bower, will tell you the whole truth about it, with a great deal more that you are not called upon to believe, unless you be a true and nothing-doubting antiquary. When you come back, I'll take you out on a ramble about the neighbourhood. To-morrow we will take a look at the Yarrow, and the next day we will drive over to Dryburgh Abbey, which is a fine old ruin, well worth your seeing.'—In a word, before Scott had got through with his plan, I found myself committed for a visit of several days, and it seemed as if a little realm of romance was suddenly open before me."

After breakfast, while Scott, no doubt, wrote a chapter of Rob Roy, Mr Irving, under young Charles's guidance, saw Melrose Abbey, and Johnnie Bower the elder, whose son long since inherited his office as showman of the ruins, and all his enthusiasm about them and their poet. The senior on this occasion "was loud in his praises of the affability of Scott. 'He'll come here sometimes,' said he, 'with great folks in his company, and the first I'll know of it is hearing his voice calling out Johnny!—Johnny Bower!—and when I go out I'm sure to be greeted with a joke or a pleasant word. He'll stand and crack an' laugh wi' me just like an auld wife, —and *to think that of a man that has such an awfu' knowledge o' history!*' "

On his return from the Abbey, Irving found Scott ready for a ramble. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of extracting some parts of his description of it.

"As we sallied forth, every dog in the establishment turned out to attend us. There was the old staghound, Maida, that I have already mentioned, a noble animal, and Hamlet, the black greyhound, a wild thoughtless youngster, not yet arrived at the years of discretion; and Finette, a beautiful setter, with soft, silken hair, long pendant ears, and a mild eye, the parlour favourite. When in front of the house, we were joined by a superannuated greyhound, who came from the kitchen wagging his tail; and was cheered by Scott as an old friend and comrade. In our walks, he would frequently pause in conversation, to notice his dogs, and speak to them as if rational companions; and, indeed, there appears to be a vast deal of rationality in these faithful attendants on man, derived from their close intimacy with him. Maida deported himself with a gravity becoming his age and size, and seemed to consider himself called upon to preserve a great degree of dignity and decorum in our society. As he jogged along a little distance ahead of us, the young dogs would gambol about him, leap on his neck, worry at his ears, and endeavour to tease him into a gambol. The old dog would keep on for a long time with imperturbable solemnity, now and then seeming to rebuke the wantonness of his young companions. At length he would make a sudden turn, seize one of them, and tumble him in the dust, then giving a glance at us, as much as to say, 'You see, gentlemen, I can't help giving way to this nonsense,' would resume his gravity, and jog on as before. Scott amused himself with these peculiarities. 'I make no doubt,' said he, 'when Maida is alone with these young dogs, he throws gravity aside, and plays the boy as much as any of them; but he is ashamed to do so in our company, and seems to say —Ha' done with your nonsense, youngsters: what will the laird and that other gentleman think of me if I give way to such foolery?'"

"Scott amused himself with the peculiarities of another of his dogs, a little shamefaced terrier, with large glassy eyes, one of the most sensitive little bodies to insult and indignity in the world. 'If ever he whipped him,' he said, 'the little fellow would sneak off and hide himself from the light of day in a lumber garret, from whence there was no drawing him forth but by the sound of the chopping-knife, as if chopping up his victuals, when he would steal forth with humiliated and downcast look, but would skulk away again if any one regarded him.'

"While we were discussing the humours and peculiarities of our canine companions, some object provoked their spleen, and produced a sharp and petulant barking from the smaller fry; but it was some time before Maida was sufficiently roused to ramp forward two or three bounds, and join the chorus with a deep-mouthed *bow wow*. It was but a transient outbreak, and he returned instantly, wagging his tail, and looking up dubiously in his master's face, uncertain whether he would receive censure or applause. 'Ay, ay, old boy!' cried Scott, 'you have done wonders; you have shaken the Eildon hills with your roaring: you may now lay by your artillery for the rest of the day. Maida,' continued he, 'is like the great gun at Constantinople; it takes so long to get it ready, that the smaller guns can fire off a dozen times first: but when it does go off, it plays the very devil!'

"These simple anecdotes may serve to show the delightful play of Scott's humours and feelings in private life. His domestic animals were his friends. Every thing about him seemed to rejoice in the light of his countenance.

"Our ramble took us on the hills commanding an extensive prospect. 'Now,' said Scott, 'I have brought you, like the pilgrim in the Pilgrim's Progress, to the top of the Delectable Mountains, that I may show you all the goodly regions hereabouts. Yonder is Lammermuir, and Smailholme; and there you have Galashiels, and Torwoodlee, and Gala Water; and in that direction you see Teviotdale and the Braes of Yarrow, and Ettrick stream winding along like a silver thread, to throw itself into the Tweed.' He went on thus to call over names celebrated in Scottish song, and most of which had recently received a romantic interest from his own pen. In fact, I saw a great part of the Border country spread out before me, and could trace the scenes of those poems and romances which had in a manner bewitched the world.

"I gazed about me for a time with mute surprise, I may almost say, with disappointment. I beheld a mere succession of grey waving hills, line beyond line, as far as my eye could reach, monotonous in their aspect, and so destitute of trees, that one could almost see a stout fly walking along their profile; and the far-famed Tweed appeared a naked stream, flowing between bare hills, without a tree or thicket on its banks; and yet such had been the magic web of poetry and romance thrown over the whole, that it had a greater charm for me than the richest scenery I had beheld in England. I could not help giving utterance to my thoughts. Scott hummed for a moment to himself, and looked grave; he had no idea of having his muse complimented at the expense of his native hills. 'It may be pertinacity,' said he at length; 'but to my eye, these grey hills, and all this wild border country, have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land; it has something bold, and stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest grey hills; and if I did not see the heather, at least once a-year, *I think I should die!*' The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied by a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that showed his heart was in his speech. He vindicated the Tweed, too, as a beautiful stream in itself; and observed, that he did not dislike it for being bare of trees, probably from having been much of an angler in his time; and an angler does not like to have a stream overhung by trees, which embarrass him in the exercise of his rod and line.

"I took occasion to plead, in like manner, the associations of early life for my disappointment in respect to the surrounding scenery. I had been so accustomed to see hills crowned with forests, and streams breaking their way through a wilderness of trees, that all my ideas of romantic landscape were apt to be well wooded. 'Ay, and that's the great charm of your country,' cried Scott. 'You love the forest as I do the heather; but I would not have you think I do not feel the glory of a great woodland prospect. There is nothing I should like more than to be in the midst of one of your grand wild original forests, with the idea of hundreds of miles of untrodden forest around me. I once saw at Leith an immense stick of timber, just landed from America. It must have been an enormous tree when it stood in its native soil, at its full height, and with all its branches. I gazed at it with admiration; it seemed like one of the gigantic obelisks which are now and then brought from Egypt to shame the pigmy monuments of Europe; and, in fact, these vast aboriginal trees, that have sheltered the Indians before the intrusion of the white men, are the monuments and antiquities of your country.'

"The conversation here turned upon Campbell's poem of Gertrude of Wyoming, as illustrative of the poetic materials furnished by American scenery. Scott cited several passages of it with great delight. 'What a pity it is,' said he, 'that Campbell does not write more, and oftener, and give full sweep to his genius! He has wings that would bear him to the skies; and he does, now and then, spread them grandly, but folds them up again, and resumes his perch, as if he was afraid to launch away. What a grand idea is that,' said he, 'about prophetic boding, or, in common parlance, second sight—

'Coming events cast their shadows before!'—

The fact is,' added he, 'Campbell is, in a manner, a bugbear to himself. The brightness of his early success is a detriment to all his further efforts. *He is afraid of the shadow that his own fame casts before him.*'

"We had not walked much farther, before we saw the two Miss Scotts advancing along the hill-side to meet us. The morning's studies being over, they had set off to take a ramble on the hills, and gather heather blossoms with which to decorate their hair for dinner. As they came bounding lightly like young fawns, and their dresses fluttering in the pure summer breeze, I was reminded of Scott's own description of his children, in his introduction to one of the cantos of Marmion:—

'My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,' &c.

As they approached, the dogs all sprang forward, and gambolled around them. They joined us with countenances full of health and glee. Sophia, the eldest, was the most lively and joyous, having much of her father's varied spirit in conversation, and seeming to catch excitement from his words and looks; Ann was of a quieter mood, rather silent, owing, in some measure, no doubt, to her being some years younger."

Having often, many years afterwards, heard Irving speak warmly of William Laidlaw, I must not omit the following passage:—

"One of my pleasantest rambles with Scott about the neighbourhood of Abbotsford, was taken in company with Mr William Laidlaw, the steward of his estate. This was a gentleman for whom Scott entertained a particular value. He had been born to a competency, had been well educated, his mind was richly stored with varied information, and he was a man of sterling moral worth. Having been reduced by misfortune, Scott had got him to take charge of his estate. He lived at a small farm, on the hillside above Abbotsford, and was treated by Scott as a cherished and confidential friend, rather than a dependant.

" That day at dinner we had Mr Laidlaw and his wife, and a female friend, who accompanied them. The latter was a very intelligent respectable person, about the middle age, and was treated with particular attention and courtesy by Scott. Our dinner was a most agreeable one, for the guests were evidently cherished visiters to the house, and felt that they were appreciated. When they were gone, Scott spoke of them in the most cordial manner. ' I wished to show you,' said he, ' some of our really excellent, plain Scotch people : not fine gentlemen and ladies, for such you can meet every where, and they are every where the same. The character of a nation is not to be learnt from its fine folks.' He then went on with a particular eulogium on the lady who had accompanied the Laidlaws. She was the daughter, he said, of a poor country clergyman, who had died in debt, and left her an orphan and destitute. Having had a good plain education, she immediately set up a child's school, and had soon a numerous flock under her care, by which she earned a decent maintenance. That, however, was not her main object. Her first care was to pay off her father's debts, that no ill word or ill will might rest upon his memory. This, by dint of Scotch economy, backed by filial reverence and pride, she accomplished, though in the effort she subjected herself to every privation. Not content with this, she in certain instances refused to take pay for the tuition of the children of some of her neighbours, who had befriended her father in his need, and had since fallen into poverty. ' In a word,' added Scott, ' she's a fine old Scotch girl, and I delight in her more than in many a fine lady I have known, and I have known many of the finest.'

" The evening passed away delightfully in a quaint-looking apartment, half study, half drawingroom. Scott read several passages from the old romance of Arthur, with a fine deep sonorous voice, and a gravity of tone that seemed to suit the antiquated black-letter volume. It was a rich treat to hear such a work read by such a person, and in such a place ; and his appearance, as he sat reading, in a large arm-chair, with his favourite hound Maida at his feet, and surrounded by books and reliques, and Border trophies, would have formed an admirable and most characteristic picture. When I retired for the night, I found it almost impossible to sleep: the idea of being under the roof of Scott; of being on the Borders on the Tweed: in the very centre of that region which had, for some time past, been the favourite scene of romantic fiction; and, above all, the recollections of the ramble I had taken, the company in which I had taken it, and the conversation which had passed, all fermented in my mind, and nearly drove sleep from my pillow.

"On the following morning the sun darted his beams from over the hills through the low lattice of my window. I rose at an early hour, and looked out between the branches of eglantine which overhung the casement. To my surprise, Scott was already up, and forth, seated on a fragment of stone, and chatting with the workmen employed in the new building. I had supposed, after the time he had wasted upon me yesterday, he would be closely occupied this morning: but he appeared like a man of leisure, who had nothing to do but bask in the sunshine, and amuse himself. I soon dressed myself and joined him. He talked about his proposed plans of Abbotsford: happy would it have been for him could he have contented himself with his delightful little vine-covered cottage, and the simple, yet hearty and hospitable, style in which he lived at the time of my visit!"*

Among other visiters who succeeded the distinguished American that autumn were Lady Byron, the wife of the poet, and the great artist, Mr, now Sir David Wilkie, who then executed for Captain Ferguson that pleasing little picture, in which Scott and his family are represented as a group of peasants, while the gallant soldier himself figures by them in the character of a gamekeeper, or perhaps poacher. Mr Irving has given, in the little work from which I have quoted so liberally, an amusing account of the delicate scruples of Wilkie about soliciting Scott to devote a morning to the requisite sitting, until, after lingering for several days, he at length became satisfied that, by whatever magic his host might contrive to keep Ballantyne's presses in full play, he had always abundance of leisure for matters less important than Ferguson's destined heirloom. I shall now, however, return to his correspondence; and begin with a letter to Joanna Baillie on Lady Byron's visit.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Abbotsford, Sept. 26, 1817.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"A series of little trinketty sort of business, and occupation, and idleness, have succeeded to each other so closely that I have been scarce able, for some three weeks past, to call my time my own for half an hour together; but enough of apologies—they are vile things, and I know you will impute my negligence to any thing rather than forgetting or undervaluing your friendship. You know, by this time, that we have had a visit from Lady Byron, delightful both on its own account, and because it was accompanied with good news and a letter from you. I regret we could not keep her longer than a day with us, which was spent on the banks of the Yarrow, and I hope and believe she was pleased with us, because I am sure she will be so with every thing that is intended to please her: meantime her visit gave me a most lawyer-like fit of the bile. I have lived too long to be surprised at any instance of human caprice, but still it vexes me. Now, one would suppose Lady Byron, young, beautiful, with birth, and rank, and fortune, and taste, and high accomplishments, and admirable good sense, qualified to have made happy one whose talents are so high as Lord Byron's, and whose marked propensity it is to like those who are qualified to admire and understand his talents; and yet it has proved otherwise. I can safely say, my heart ached for her all the time we were together; there was so much patience and decent resignation to a situation which must have pressed on her thoughts, that she was to me one of the most interesting creatures I had seen for a score of years. I am sure I should not have felt such strong kindness towards her had she been at the height of her fortune, and in the full enjoyment of all the brilliant prospects to which she seemed destined. You will wish to hear of my complaint. I think, thank God, that it is leaving me—not suddenly, however, for I have had some repetitions, but they have become fainter and fainter, and I have not been disturbed by one for these three weeks. I trust, by care and attention, my stomach will return to its usual tone, and I am as careful as I can. I have taken hard exercise with good effect, and am often six hours on foot without stopping or sitting down, to which my plantations and enclosures contribute not a little. I have, however, given up the gun this season, finding myself unable to walk up to the dogs; but Walter has taken it in hand, and promises to be a first-rate shot; he brought us in about seven or eight brace of birds the evening Lady Byron came to us, which papa was of course a little proud of. The black-cocks are getting very plenty on our moor ground at Abbotsford, but I associate them so much with your beautiful poem,* that I have not the pleasure I used to have in knocking them down. I wish I knew how to send you a brace. I get on with my labours here; my house is about to be roofed in, and a comical concern it is. Yours truly, W. S."

The next letter refers to the Duke of Buccleuch's preparations for a cattle-show at Bowhill, which was followed by an entertainment on a large scale to his Grace's Selkirkshire neighbours and tenantry, and next day by a fox-hunt, after Dandie Dinmont's fashion, among the rocks of the Yarrow. The Sheriff attended *with his tail on;* and Wilkie, too, went with him. It was there that Sir David first saw Hogg, and the Shepherd's greeting was graceful. He eyed the great painter for a moment in silence, and then stretching out his hand, said,—"Thank God for it. I did not know that you were so young a man!"

---

* "Good-morrow to thy sable beak,
And glossy plumage dark and sleek,
Thy crimson moon, and azure eye,
Cock of the heath, so wildly shy!" &c.

To the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c. &c. Drumlanrig Castle.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I am just honoured with your Grace's of the 27th. The posts, which are as cross as pye-crust, have occasioned some delay. Depend on our attending at Bowhill on the 20th, and staying over the show. I have written to Adam Ferguson, who will come with a whoop and a hollo. So will the Ballantynes—flageolet[*] and all—for the festival, and they shall be housed at Abbotsford. I have an inimitably good songster in the person of Terence Magrath, who teaches my girls. He beats almost all whom I have ever heard attempt Moore's songs, and I can easily cajole him also out to Abbotsford for a day or two. In jest or earnest, I never heard a better singer in a room, though his voice is not quite full enough for a concert; and for an after-supper song, he almost equals Irish Johnstone.[†]

"Trade of every kind is recovering, and not a loom idle in Glasgow. The most faithful respects of this family attend the Ladies and all at Drumlanrig. I ever am your Grace's truly obliged and grateful

WALTER SCOTT.

---

[*] The *flageolet* alludes to Mr Alexander Ballantyne, the third of the brothers—a fine musician, and a most amiable and modest man, never connected with Scott in any business matters, but always much his favourite in private.

[†] Mr Magrath has now been long established in his native city of Dublin. His musical excellence was by no means the only merit that attached Scott to his society while he remained in Edinburgh.

"Given from my Castle of Grawacky,
this second day of the month called
October, One Thousand Eight
Hundred and Seventeen Years.

"There is a date nearly as long as the letter.

"I hope we shall attack the foxes at Bowhill. I will hazard Maida."

We have some allusions to this Bowhill party in another letter; the first of several which I shall now insert according to their dates, leaving them, with a few marginal notes, to tell out the story of 1817 :—

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, October 24, 1817.

"Dear Terry,

"Bullock has not gone to Skye, and I am very glad he has not, for to me who knew the Hebrides well, the attempt seemed very perilous at this season. I have considerably enlarged my domains since I wrote to you, by the purchase of a beautiful farm adjacent. The farm-house, which is new and excellent, I have let to Adam Ferguson and his sisters. We will be within a pleasant walk of each other, and hope to end our lives, as they began, in each other's society. There is a beautiful brook, with remnants of natural wood, which would make Toftfield rival Abbotsford, but for the majestic Tweed. I am in treaty for a field or two more; one of which contains the only specimen of a Peel-house, or defensive residence of a small proprietor, which remains in this neighbourhood. It is an orchard, in the hamlet of Darnick, to which it gives a most picturesque effect. Blore admires it very much. We are all well here, but crowded with company. I have been junketting this week past at Bowhill. Mr Magrath has been with us these two or three days, and has seen his ward, Hamlet,* behave most *princelike* on Newark Hill and elsewhere. He promises to be a real treasure. Notwithstanding, Mr Magrath went to Bowhill with me one day, where his vocal talents gave great pleasure, and I hope will procure him the notice and protection of the Buccleuch family. The Duke says my building engrosses, as a common centre, the thoughts of Mr Atkinson and Mr Bullock, and wishes he could make them equally anxious in his own behalf. You may believe this flatters me not a little.

" P. S.—I agree with you that the tower will look rather rich for the rest of the building; yet you may be assured, that with diagonal chimneys and notched gables, it will have a very fine effect, and is in Scotch architecture by no means incompatible. My house has been like a *cried fair*, and extreme the inconvenience of having no corner sacred to my own use, and free from intrusion. Ever truly yours,

W. S."

To the Same.

" Abbotsford, 29th October, 1817.

" My dear Terry,

" I enclose a full sketch of the lower story, with accurate measurements of rooms, casements, door-ways, chimneys, &c. that Mr Atkinson's good will may not want means to work upon. I will speak to the subjects of your letter separately, that I may omit none of them. 1*st*, I cannot possibly surrender the window to the west in the

---

* This fine greyhound, a gift from Terry, had been sent to Scotland under the care of Mr Magrath. Terry had called the dog *Marmion*, but Scott rechristened him *Hamlet*, in honour of his " inky coat."

THECA

library,* although I subscribe to all you urge about it. Still it is essential in point of light to my old eyes, and the single northern aspect would not serve me. Above all, it looks into the yard, and enables me to summon Tom Purdie without the intervention of a third party. Indeed, as I can have but a few books about me, it is of the less consequence. *2dly*, I resign the idea of *coving* the library to your better judgment, and I think the Stirling Heads† will be admirably disposed in the glass of the armoury window. I have changed my mind as to having doors on the book-presses, which is, after all, a great bore. No person will be admitted into my sanctum, and I can have the door locked during my absence. *3dly*, I expect Mr Bullock here every day, and should be glad to have the drawings for the diningroom wainscot, as he could explain them to the artists who are to work them. This (always if quite convenient) would be the more desirable, as I must leave this place in a fortnight at farthest—the more's the pity—and, consequently, the risk of blunders will be considerably increased. I should like if the pannelling of the wainscot could admit of a press on each side of the sideboard. I don't mean a formal press with a high door, but some crypt, or, to speak vulgarly, *cupboard*, to put away bottles of wine, &c. You know I am my own butler, and such accommodation is very convenient. We begin roofing to-morrow. Wilkie admires the whole as a composition,

---

* Before the second and larger part of the present house of Abbotsford was built, the small room, subsequently known as the breakfast parlour, was during several years Scott's *sanctum*.

† This alludes to certain pieces of painted glass, representing the heads of some of the old Scotch kings, copied from the carved ceiling of the presence-chamber in Stirling Castle. There are engravings of them in a work called "Lacunar Strevelinense." Edinb. 4to, 1817.

and that is high authority. I agree that the fountain shall be out of doors in front of the green-house; there may be an enclosure for it with some ornamented mason-work, as in old gardens, and it will occupy an angle, which I should be puzzled what to do with, for turf and gravel would be rather meagre, and flowers not easily kept. I have the old fountain belonging to the Cross of Edinburgh, which flowed with wine at the coronation of our kings and on other occasions of public rejoicing. I send a sketch of this venerable relic, connected as it is with a thousand associations. It is handsome in its forms and proportions—a free-stone basin about three feet in diameter, and five inches and a half in depth, very handsomely hollowed. A piece has been broken off one edge, but as we have the fragment, it can easily be restored with cement. There are four openings for pipes in the circumference—each had been covered with a Gothic masque, now broken off and defaced, but which may be easily restored. Through these the wine had fallen into a larger and lower reservoir. I intend this for the centre of my fountain. I do not believe I should save L.100 by retaining Mrs Redford, by the time she was raised, altered, and beautified, for, like the Highlandman's gun, she wants stock, lock, and barrel to put her into repair. In the mean time, 'the cabin is convenient.'
Yours ever, W. S."

To Mr William Laidlaw, Kaeside.

"Edinburgh, Nov. 15th, 1817.

"Dear Willie,

"I have no intention to let the Whitehaugh without your express approbation, and I wish you to act as my adviser and representative in these matters. I would hardly have ventured to purchase so much land without the certainty of your counsel and co-operation. . . . . . .

On the other side you will find a small order on the banker at Galashiels, to be renewed half-yearly; not by way of recompensing your friendship 'with a load of barren money,' but merely to ease my conscience in some degree for the time which I must necessarily withdraw from the labour which is to maintain your family. Believe me, dear Willie, yours truly,

W. Scott."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 19th Nov. 1817.

"Dear Willie,

"I hope you will not quarrel with my last. Believe me that, to a sound-judging, and philosophical mind this same account of Dr. and Cr., which fills up so much time in the world, is comparatively of very small value. When you get rich, unless I thrive in the same proportion, I will request your assistance for less, for little, or for nothing, as the case may require; but while I wear my seven-league boots to stride in triumph over moss and muir, it would be very silly in either of us to let a cheque twice a-year of L.25 make a difference between us. But all this we will talk over when we meet. I meditate one day a *coup-de-maitre*, which will make my friend's advice and exertion essential—indeed worthy of much better remuneration. When you come, I hope you will bring us information of all my rural proceedings. Though so lately come to town, I still remember, at my waking hours, that I can neither see Tom Purdie nor Adam Paterson,* and rise with the more unwillingness. I was unwell on Monday and Tuesday, but am quite recovered. Yours truly,

W. S."

---

* Adam Paterson was the intelligent foreman of the company of masons then employed at Abbotsford.

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Paymaster, 70th Regiment, Kingston, Canada.

"Edinburgh, 13th Dec. 1817.

"My dear Tom,

"I should be happy to attend to your commission about a dominie for your boy, but I think there will be much risk in yoking yourself with one for three or four years. You know what sort of black cattle these are, and how difficult it is to discern their real character, though one may give a guess at their attainments. When they get good provender in their guts, they are apt to turn out very different animals from what they were in their original low condition, and get frisky and troublesome. I have made several enquiries, however, and request to know what salary you would think reasonable, and also what acquisitions he ought to possess. There is no combating the feelings which you express for the society of your son, otherwise I really think that a Scottish education would be highly desirable; and should you at any time revert to this plan, you may rely on my bestowing the same attention upon him as upon my own boys.

"I agree entirely with you on the necessity of your remaining in the regiment while it is stationary, and retiring on half-pay when it marches; but I cannot so easily acquiesce in your plan of settling in Canada. On the latter event taking place, on the contrary, I think it would be highly advisable that you should return to your native country. In the course of nature you must soon be possessed of considerable property, now liferented by our mother, and I should think that even your present income would secure you comfort and independence here. Should you remain in Canada, you must consider your family as settlers in that state, and as I cannot believe that it will remain very long separated from America, I should almost think this equal to depriving them of the advantages of British subjects—at least of those which they might derive from their respectable connexions in this country. With respect to your son, in particular, I have little doubt that I could be of considerable service to him in almost any line of life he might chance to adopt here, but could of course have less influence on his fortunes, were he to remain on the Niagara. I certainly feel anxious on this subject, because the settlement of your residence in America would be saying, in other words, that we two, the last remains of a family once so numerous, are never more to meet upon this side of time. My own health is very much broken up by the periodical recurrence of violent cramps in the stomach, which neither seem disposed to yield to medicine nor to abstinence. The complaint, the doctors say, is not dangerous in itself, but I cannot look forward to its continued recurrence, without being certain that it is to break my health, and anticipate old age in cutting me short. Be it so my dear Tom—*Sat est vixisse*—and I am too much of a philosopher to be anxious about protracted life, which, with all its infirmities and deprivations, I have never considered as a blessing. In the years which may be before me, it would be a lively satisfaction to me to have the pleasure of seeing you in this country, with the prospect of a comfortable settlement. I have but an imperfect account to render of my doings here. I have amused myself with making an addition to my cottage in the country; one little apartment is to be fitted up as an armoury for my old relics and curiosities. On the wicket I intend to mount your *deer's foot* *—as an appropriate knocker. I hope the young ladies liked their watches, and that all your books, stationary, &c., came safe to hand. I am told you have several kinds of the oak peculiar to America. If you can send me a few good acorns, with the names of the kinds they belong to, I will have them reared with great care and attention. The heaviest and smoothest acorns should be selected, as one would wish them, sent from such a distance, to succeed, which rarely happens unless they are particularly well ripened. I shall be as much obliged to you as Sancho was to the Duchess, or, to speak more correctly, the Duchess to Sancho, for a similar favour. Our mother keeps her health surprisingly well now, nor do I think there is any difference, unless that her deafness is rather increased. My eldest boy is upwards of six feet high; therefore born, as Sergeant Kite says, to be a great man. I should not like such a rapid growth, but that he carries strength along with it; my youngest boy is a very sharp little fellow—and the girls give us great satisfaction. Ever affectionately yours,

---

* Thomas Scott had sent his brother the horns and feet of a gigantic stag, shot by him in Canada. The feet were ultimately suspended to bell-cords in the armoury at Abbotsford; and the horns mounted as drinking cups.

WALTER SCOTT."

The following note is without date. It accompanied, no doubt, the last proof-sheet of Rob Roy, and was therefore in all probability written about ten days before the 31st of December, 1817—on which day the novel was published.

To Mr James Ballantyne, St John Street.

" Dear James,

With great joy
I send you Roy.
'Twas a tough job,
But we're done with Rob.

" I forget if I mentioned Terry in my list of Friends. Pray send me two or three copies as soon as you can.

It were pity to make the Grinder * pay carriage. Yours ever,

W. S."

The novel had indeed been "a tough job"—for lightly and airily as it reads, the author had struggled almost throughout with the pains of cramp or the lassitude of opium. Calling on him one day to dun him for copy, James Ballantyne found him with a clean pen and a blank sheet before him, and uttered some rather solemn exclamation of surprise. "Ay, ay, Jemmy," said he, "'tis easy for you to bid me get on, but how the deuce can I make Rob Roy's wife speak with such a *curmurring* in my guts?"

---

* They called Daniel Terry among themselves "The Grinder," in double allusion to the song of *Terry the Grinder*, and to some harsh under-notes of their friend's voice.

CHAPTER IV.

ROB ROY PUBLISHED—NEGOTIATION CONCERNING THE SECOND SERIES OF TALES OF MY LANDLORD—COMMISSION TO SEARCH FOR THE SCOTTISH REGALIA—LETTERS TO THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—MR CROKER—MR MORRITT—MR MURRAY—MR MATURIN, &c.—CORRESPONDENCE ON RURAL AFFAIRS WITH MR LAIDLAW—AND ON THE BUILDINGS AT ABBOTSFORD WITH MR TERRY—DEATH OF MRS MURRAY KEITH AND MR GEORGE BULLOCK—

1818.

ROB ROY and his wife, Bailie Nicol Jarvie and his housekeeper, Die Vernon and Rashleigh Osbaldistone—these boldly drawn and most happily contrasted personages—were welcomed as warmly as the most fortunate of their predecessors. Constable's resolution to begin with an edition of 10,000, proved to have been as sagacious as bold; for within a fortnight a second impression of 3000 was called for; and the subsequent sale of this novel has considerably exceeded 40,000 more.

Scott, however, had not waited for this new burst of applause. As soon as he came within view of the completion of Rob Roy, he desired John Ballantyne to propose to Constable and Co. a second series of the Tales of my Landlord, to be comprised, like the first, in four volumes, and ready for publication by "the King's birth-day;" that is, the 4th of June, 1818. "I have hungered and thirsted," he wrote, "to see the end of those shabby borrowings among friends; they have all been wiped out except the good Duke's L.4000—and I will not suffer either new offers of land or any thing else to come in the way of that clearance. I expect that you will be able to arrange this resurrection of Jedediah, so that L.5000 shall be at my order."

Mr Rigdum used to glory in recounting that he acquitted himself on this occasion with a species of dexterity not contemplated in his commission. He well knew how sorely Constable had been wounded by seeing the first Tales of Jedediah published by Murray and Blackwood—and that the utmost success of Rob Roy would only double his anxiety to keep them out of the field, when the hint should be dropt that a second MS. from Gandercleuch might shortly be looked for. He, therefore, took a convenient opportunity to mention the new scheme as if casually—so as to give Constable the impression that the author's purpose was to divide the second series also between his old rival in Albemarle Street, of whom his jealousy was always most sensitive, and his neighbour Blackwood, whom, if there had been no other grudge, the recent conduct and rapidly increasing sale of his Magazine would have been sufficient to make Constable hate with a perfect hatred. To see not only his old Scots Magazine eclipsed, but the authority of the Edinburgh Review itself bearded on its own soil by this juvenile upstart, was to him gall and wormwood; and, moreover, he himself had come in for his share in some of those grotesque *jeux d'esprit* by which, at this period, Blackwood's young Tory wags delighted to assail their elders and betters of the Whig persuasion. To prevent the proprietor of this new journal from acquiring any thing like a hold on the author of Waverley, and thus competing with himself not only in periodical literature, but in the highest of the time, was an object for which, as John Ballantyne shrewdly guessed, Constable would have made at that moment almost any sacrifice. When, therefore, the haughty but trembling bookseller—" The Lord High Constable" (as he had been dubbed by these jesters)—signified his earnest hope that the second Tales of my Landlord were destined to come out under the same auspices with Rob Roy, the plenipotentiary answered with an air of deep regret, that he feared it would be impossible for the author to dispose of the work unless to publishers who should agree to take with it *the whole* of the remaining stock of " John Ballantyne and Co.;" and Constable, pertinaciously as he had stood out against many more modest propositions of this nature, was so worked upon by his jealous feelings, that his resolution at once gave way. He agreed on the instant to do all that John seemed to shrink from asking—and at one sweep cleared the Augean stable in Hanover Street of unsaleable rubbish to the amount of L.5270! I am assured by his surviving partner that when he had finally redisposed of the stock, he found himself a loser by fully two-thirds of this sum.

Burthened with this heavy condition, the agreement for the sale of 10,000 copies of the embryo series was signed before the end of November, 1817; and on the 7th of January, 1818, Scott wrote as follows to his noble friend:—

To the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c.

" My dear Lord Duke,

" I have the great pleasure of enclosing the discharged bond which your Grace stood engaged in for me, and on my account. The accommodation was of the greatest consequence to me, as it enabled me to retain possession of some valuable literary property, which I must otherwise have suffered to be sold at a time when the booksellers had no money to buy it. My dear Lord, to wish that all your numerous and extensive acts of kindness may be attended with similar advantages to the persons whom you oblige, is wishing you what to your mind will be the best recompense; and to wish that they may be felt by all as gratefully as by me, though you may be careless to hear about that part of the story, is only wishing what is creditable to human nature. I have this moment your more than kind letter, and congratulate your Grace that, in one sense of the word, you can be what you never will be in any other, *ambidexter*. But I am sorry you took so much trouble, and I fear *pains* besides, to display your new talent. Ever your Grace's truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

The closing sentence of this letter refers to a fit of the gout which had disabled the Duke's right hand, but not cooled his zeal on a subject which, throughout January, 1818, occupied, I firmly believe, much more of his correspondent's thoughts by day and dreams by night, than any one, or perhaps than all others, besides. The time now approached when a Commission to examine the Crown-room in the Castle of Edinburgh, which had sprung from one of Scott's conversations with the Prince Regent in 1815, was at length to be acted upon. The minstrel of the "Rough Clan" had taken care that the name of his chief should stand at the head of the document; but the Duke's now precarious health ultimately prevented him from being present at the discovery of the long buried and almost forgotten regalia of Scotland. The two following letters on this subject are of the same date—Edinburgh, 14th January, 1818.

To the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c. Bowhill.

"My dear Lord,

"You will hear from the Advocate, that the Commission for opening the Regalia is arrived, and that the Commissioners held their first meeting yesterday. They have named next Wednesday (in case your Grace can attend) for opening the mysterious chest. So this question will be put to rest for ever.

"I remember among the rebel company which debauched my youth, there was a drunken old Tory, who used to sing a ballad made about these same regalia at the time of the Union, in which they were all destined to the basest uses; the crown, for example,

'To make a can for Brandy Nan
To puke in when she's tipsy.'

The rest of the song is in a tone of equally pure humour; the chorus ran—

'Farewell, thou ancient kingdom—
Farewell, thou ancient kingdom,
Who sold thyself for English pelf—
Was ever such a thing done?'

I hope your Grace feels yourself sufficiently interested in the recovery of these ancient symbols of national independence, so long worn by your forefathers, and which were never profaned by the touch of a monarch of a foreign dynasty.—Here is fine planting weather. I trust it is as good in the Forest and on Tweedside. Ever your Grace's truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Rokeby.

"Dear Morritt,

"Our fat friend has remembered a petition which I put up to him, and has granted a Commission to the Officers of State and others (my unworthy self included)—which trusty and well-beloved persons are to institute a search after the Regalia of Scotland. There has an odd mystery hung about the fate of these royal symbols of national independence. The spirit of the Scotch at the Union clang fondly to these emblems; and to sooth their jealousy, it was specially provided by an article of the Union, that the Regalia should never be removed, under any pretext, from the kingdom of Scotland. Accordingly, they were deposited, with much ceremony, as an authentic instrument bears, in a strong chest, secured by many locks, and the chest itself placed in a strong room, which again was carefully bolted up and secured, leaving to national pride the satisfaction of pointing to the barred window, with the consciousness that there lay the Regalia of Scotland. But this gratification was strangely qualified by a surmise, which somehow became generally averred, stating, that the Regalia had been sent to London; and you may remember that we saw at the Jewel Office a crown, *said to be* the ancient Crown of Scotland. If this transfer (by the way highly illegal) was ever made, it must have been under some secret warrant; for no authority can be traced for such a proceeding in the records of the Secretary of State's Office. Fifteen or twenty years ago, the Crown-room, as it is called, was opened by certain Commissioners, under authority of a sign-manual. They saw the fatal chest, strewed with the dust of an hundred years, about six inches thick: a coating of like thickness lay on the floor; and I have heard the late President Blair say, that the uniform and level appearance of the dust warranted them to believe that the chest, if opened at all after 1707, must have been violated within a short time of that date, since, had it been opened at a later period, the dust accumulated on the lid, and displaced at opening it, must have been lying around the chest. But the Commissioners did not think their warrant entitled them to force this chest, for which no keys could be found; especially as their warrant only entitled them to search for *records*—not for crowns and sceptres.

"The mystery, therefore, remained unpenetrated; and public curiosity was left to console itself with the nursery rhime—

> 'On Tintock tap there is a mist,
> And in the mist there is a kist.'

Our fat friend's curiosity, however, goes to the point at once, authorizing and enjoining an express search for the Regalia. Our friend of Buccleuch is at the head of the commission, and will, I think, be as keen as I or any one to see the issue.

"I trust you have read Rob by this time. I think he smells of the cramp. Above all, I had too much flax on my distaff; and as it did not consist with my patience or my plan to make a fourth volume, I was obliged at last to draw a rough, coarse, and hasty thread. But the book is well liked here, and has reeled off in great style. I have two stories on the anvil, far superior to Rob Roy in point of interest. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The Commissioners, who finally assembled on the 4th of February, were, according to the record—"the Right Hon. Charles Hope, Lord President of the Court of Session; the Right Hon. David Boyle, Lord Justice Clerk; the Right Hon. William Adam, Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court; Major-General John Hope (Commanding the Forces in Scotland); the Solicitor General (James Wedderburn, Esq.); the Lord Provost of Edinburgh (Kincaid Mackenzie, Esq.); William Clerk, Esq., Principal Clerk of the Jury Court;

Henry Jardine, Esq., Deputy Remembrancer in the Exchequer; Thomas Thompson, Esq., Deputy Clerk Register of Scotland; and Walter Scott, Esq., one of the Principal Clerks of Session."

Of the proceedings of this day, the reader has a full and particular account in an Essay which Scott penned shortly afterwards, and which is included in his Prose Miscellanies (vol. vii.) But I must not omit the contemporaneous letters in which he announced the success of the quest to his friend the Secretary of the Admiralty, and through him to the Regent—

To J. W. Croker, Esq. M.P., &c. &c. Admiralty, London.

"Edinburgh, 4th Feb., 1818.

"My dear Croker,

"I have the pleasure to assure you the Regalia of Scotland were this day found in perfect preservation. The Sword of State and Sceptre showed marks of hard usage at some former period; but in all respects agree with the description in Thomson's work.[*] I will send you a complete account of the opening to-morrow, as the official account will take some time to draw up. In the mean time, I hope you will remain as obstinate in your unbelief as St Thomas, because then you will come down to satisfy yourself. I know nobody entitled to earlier information, save ONE, to whom you can perhaps find the means of communicating the result of our researches. The post is just going off. Ever yours truly, WALTER SCOTT."

---

[*] Collection of Inventories and other Records of the Royal Wardrobe and Jewel-House, &c. Edin. 1815, 4to.

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 5th February, 1818.

"My dear Croker,

"I promised I would add something to my report of yesterday, and yet I find I have but little to say. The extreme solemnity of opening sealed doors of oak and iron, and finally breaking open a chest which had been shut since 7th March, 1707, about a hundred and eleven years, gave a sort of interest to our researches, which I can hardly express to you, and it would be very difficult to describe the intense eagerness with which we watched the rising of the lid of the chest, and the progress of the workmen in breaking it open, which was neither an easy nor a speedy task. It sounded very hollow when they worked on it with their tools, and I began to lean to your faction of the Little Faiths. However, I never could assign any probable or feasible reason for withdrawing these memorials of ancient independence; and my doubts rather arose from the conviction that many absurd things are done in public as well as in private life merely out of a hasty impression of passion or resentment. For it was evident the removal of the Regalia might have greatly irritated people's minds here, and offered a fair pretext of breaking the Union which, for thirty years, was the predominant wish of the Scottish nation.

"The discovery of the Regalia has interested people's minds much more strongly than I expected, and is certainly calculated to make a pleasant and favourable impression upon them in respect to the kingly part of the constitution. It would be of the utmost consequence that they should be occasionally shown to them, under proper regulations, and for a small fee. The Sword of State is a most beautiful piece of workmanship, a present from Pope Julius II. to James IV. The scabbard is richly decorated with filigree work of silver, double gilded, representing oak leaves and acorns, executed in a taste worthy that classical age in which the arts revived. A draughtsman has been employed to make sketches of these articles, in order to be laid before his Royal Highness. The fate of these Regalia, which his Royal Highness' goodness has thus restored to light and honour, has, on one or two occasions been singular enough. They were, in 1652, lodged in the Castle of Dunnottar, the seat of the Earl Marischal, by whom, according to his ancient privilege, they were kept. The castle was defended by George Ogilvie of Barra, who, apprehensive of the progress which the English made in reducing the strong places in Scotland, became anxious for the safety of these valuable memorials. The ingenuity of his lady had them conveyed out of the castle in a bag on a woman's back, among some *hards*, as they are called, of lint. They were carried to the Kirk of Kinneff, and intrusted to the care of the clergyman named Grainger, and his wife, and buried under the pulpit. The Castle of Dunnottar, though very strong and faithfully defended, was at length under necessity of surrendering, being the last strong place in Britain on which the royal flag floated in those calamitous times. Ogilvie and his lady were threatened with the utmost extremities by the Republican General Morgan, unless they should produce the Regalia. The governor stuck to it that he knew nothing of them, as in fact they had been carried away without his knowledge. The Lady maintained she had given them to John Keith, second son of the Earl Marischal, by whom, she said, they had been carried to France. They suffered a long imprisonment, and much ill usage. On the Restoration, the old Countess Marischal, founding upon the story Mrs Ogilvie had told to screen her husband, obtained for her own son, John Keith, the earldom of Kintore, and the post of Knight Marischal, with L.400 a-year, as if he had been in truth the preserver of the Regalia. It soon proved that this reward had been too hastily given, for Ogilvie of Barra produced the Regalia, the honest clergyman refusing to deliver them to any one but those from whom he received them. Ogilvie was made a Knight Baronet, however, and got a new charter of the lands acknowledging the good service. Thus it happened oddly enough, that Keith who was abroad during the transaction, and had nothing to do with it, got the earldom, pension, &c., Ogilvie only inferior honours, and the poor clergyman nothing whatever, or, as we say, *the hare's foot to lick.* As for Ogilvie's lady, she died before the Restoration, her health being ruined by the hardships she endured from the Cromwellian satellites. She was a Douglas, with all the high spirit of that proud family. On her deathbed, and not till then, she told her husband where the honours were concealed, charging him to suffer death rather than betray them. Popular tradition says, not very probably, that Grainger and his wife were *booted* (that is, tortured with the engine called the boots). I think the Knight Marischal's office rested in the Kintore family until 1715, when it was resumed on account of the bearded Earl's accession to the Insurrection of that year. He escaped well, for they might have taken his estate and his earldom. I must save post, however, and conclude abruptly. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 5th, after the foregoing letter had been written at the Clerk's table, Scott and several of his brother Commissioners revisited the Castle, accompanied by some of the ladies of their families. His daughter tells me that her father's conversation had worked her feelings up to such a pitch, that when the lid was again removed, she nearly fainted, and drew back from the circle. As she was retiring, she was startled by his voice exclaiming, in a tone of the deepest emotion, "something between anger and despair," as she expresses it,—"By G— No!" One of the Commissioners, not quite entering into the solemnity with which Scott regarded this business, had, it seems, made a sort of motion as if he meant to put the crown on the head of one of the young ladies near him, but the voice and aspect of the Poet were more than sufficient to make the worthy gentleman understand his error; and respecting the enthusiasm with which he had not been taught to sympathize, he laid down the ancient diadem with an air of painful embarrassment. Scott whispered "pray, forgive me;" and turning round at the moment, observed his daughter deadly pale, and leaning by the door. He immediately drew her out of the room, and when the air had somewhat recovered her, walked with her across the Mound to Castle Street. "He never spoke all the way home," she says, "but every now and then, I felt his arm tremble; and from that time I fancied he began to treat me more like a woman than a child. I thought he liked me better, too, than he had ever done before."

These little incidents may give some notion of the profound seriousness with which his imagination had invested this matter. I am obliged to add, that in the society of Edinburgh at the time, even in the highest Tory circles, it did not seem to awaken much even of curiosity—to say nothing of any deeper feeling; there was, however, a great excitement among the common people of the town, and a still greater among the peasantry, not only in the neighbourhood, but all over Scotland; and the Crown-room, becoming thenceforth one of the established *lions* of a city much resorted to, moreover, by stranger tourists, was likely, on the most moderate scale of admission-fee, to supply a revenue sufficient for remunerating responsible and respectable guardianship. This post would, as Scott thought, be a very suitable one for his friend, Captain Adam Ferguson; and he exerted all his zeal for that purpose. The Captain was appointed: his nomination, however, did not take place for some months after; and the postscript of a letter to the Duke of Buccleuch, dated May 14th, 1818, plainly indicates the interest on which Scott mainly relied for its completion:—" If you happen," he writes, " to see Lord Melville, pray give him a jog about Ferguson's affair; but between ourselves, I depend chiefly on the kind offices of Willie Adam, who is an auld sneck-drawer." The Lord Chief Commissioner, at all times ready to lend Scott his influence with the Royal Family, had, on the present occasion, the additional motive of warm and hereditary personal regard for Ferguson.

I have placed together such letters as referred principally to the episode of the Regalia; but shall now give in the order of time, a few which will sufficiently illustrate the usual course of his existence, while the Heart of Mid-Lothian was in progress. It appears that he resumed, in the beginning of this year, his drama of Devorgoil; his letters to Terry are of course full of that subject, but they contain, at the same time, many curious indications of his views and feelings as to theatrical affairs in general—and mixed up with these a most characteristic record of the earnestness with which he now watched the interior fitting up, as he had in the season before the outward architecture, of the new edifice at Abbotsford. Mean while it will be seen that he found leisure hours for various contributions to periodical works;

among others an article on Kirkton's Church History, and another on (of all subjects in the world) *military bridges*, for the Quarterly Review; a spirited version of the old German ballad on the Battle of Sempach, and a generous criticism on Mrs Shelly's romance of Frankenstein, for Blackwood's Magazine. This being the first winter and spring of Laidlaw's establishment at Kaeside, communications as to the affairs of the farm were exchanged weekly whenever Scott was in Edinburgh, and they afford delightful evidence of that paternal solicitude for the wellbeing of his rural dependants, which all along kept pace with Scott's zeal as to the economical improvement, and the picturesque adornment of his territories.

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Edinburgh, 23d Jan. 1818.

"My dear Terry,

"You have by this time the continuation of the drama, down to the commencement of the third act, as I have your letter on the subject of the first. You will understand that I only mean them as sketches; for the first and second acts are too short, and both want much to combine them with the third. I can easily add music to Miss Devorgoil's part. As to Braham, he is a beast of an actor, though an angel of a singer, and truly I do not see what he could personify. Let me know, however, your thoughts and wishes, and all shall be moulded to the best of my power to meet them; the point is to make it *take* if we can; the rest is all leather and prunella. A great many things must occur to you technically better, in the way of alteration and improvement, and you know well that, though too indolent to amend things on my own conviction, I am always ready to make them meet my friends' wishes if possible. We shall both wish it better than I can make it, but there is no reason why we should not do for it all that we can. I advise you to take some sapient friend into your counsels, and let me know the result, returning the MS. at the same time.

" I am now anxious to complete Abbotsford. I think I told you I mean to do nothing whatever to the present house, but to take it away altogether at some future time, so that I finish the upper story without any communication with Mrs Redford's *ci-devant* mansion, and shall place the opening in the lower story, wherever it will be most suitable for the new house, without regard to defacing the temporary drawingroom. I am quite feverish about the armoury. I have two pretty complete suits of armour, one Indian one, and a cuirassier's, with boots, casque, &c.; many helmets, corslets, and steel caps, swords and poniards without end, and about a dozen of guns, ancient and modern. I have besides two or three battle-axes and maces, pikes and targets, a Highlander's accoutrement complete, a great variety of branches of horns, pikes, bows and arrows, and the clubs and creases of Indian tribes. Mr Bullock promised to give some hint about the fashion of disposing all these matters; and now our spring is approaching, and I want but my plans to get on. I have reason to be proud of the finishing of my castle, for even of the tower for which I trembled, not a stone has been shaken by the late terrific gale, which blew a roof clear off in the neighbourhood. It was lying in the road like a saddle, as Tom Purdie expressed it. Neither has a slate been lifted, though about two yards of slating were stripped from the stables in the haugh, which you know were comparatively less exposed.

" I am glad to hear of Mrs Terry's improved health and good prospects. As for young Master Mumblecrust, I have no doubt he will be a credit to us all. Yours ever truly,

W. Scott."

As the letters to Mr Laidlaw did not travel by post, but in the basket which had come laden with farm-produce for the use of the family in Edinburgh, they have rarely any date but the day of the week. This is, however, of no consequence.

To Mr Laidlaw, Kaeside.

" Wednesday. [Jan. 1818.]

" Dear Willie,

" Should the weather be rough, and you nevertheless obliged to come to town, do not think of riding, but take the Blucher.* Remember your health is of consequence to your family. Pray, talk generally with the notables of Darnick—I mean Rutherford, and so forth, concerning the best ordering of the road to the marle; and also of the foot-road. It appears to me some route might be found more convenient than the present, but that which is most agreeable to those interested shall also be most agreeable for me. As a patriotic member of the community of Darnick, I consider their rights equally important as my own.

" I told you I should like to convert the present steading at Beechland into a little hamlet of labourers, which we will name Abbotstown. The art of making people happy is to leave them much to their own guidance, but some little regulation is necessary. In the first place I should like to have active and decent people there; then it is to be considered on what footing they should be. I conceive the best possible is, that they should pay for their cottages, and cow-grass, and potato ground; and be paid for their labour at the ordinary rate. I would give them some advantages sufficient to balance the following conditions, which, after all, are conditions in my favour —1st, That they shall keep their cottages, and little gardens, and doors, tolerably neat; and 2d, That the men shall on no account shoot, or the boys break timber, or take birds' nests, or go among the planting. I do not know any other restrictions, and these are easy. I should think we might settle a few families very happily here, which is an object I have much at heart, for I have no notion of the proprietor who is only ambitious to be lord of the 'beast and the brute,' and chases the human face from his vicinity. By the by, could we not manage to have a piper among the colonists?

---

* A stage-coach so called which runs betwixt Edinburgh and Melrose.

"We are delighted to hear that your little folks like the dells. Pray, in your walks try to ascertain the locality of St John's Well, which cures the botts, and which John Moss claims for Kaeside; also the true history of the Carline's Hole. Ever most truly yours,

W. Scott.

"I hope Mrs Laidlaw does not want for any thing that she can get from the garden or elsewhere."

To Daniel Terry, Esq.

"8th February, 1818.

"My dear Terry,

"Yours arrived, unluckily, just half an hour after my packet was in the Post-office, so this will cost you 9d., for which I grieve. To answer your principal question first, the drama is

'Yours, Terry, yours in every thought.'

"I should never have dreamed of making such an attempt in my own proper person; and if I had such a vision, I should have been anxious to have made it something of a legitimate drama, such as a literary man, uncalled upon by any circumstance to connect himself with the stage, might have been expected to produce. Now this is just what any gentleman in your situation might run off, to give a little novelty to the entertainment of the year, and as such will meet a mitigated degree of criticism, and have a better chance of that *productive* success, which is my principal object in my godson's behalf. If any time should come when you might wish to disclose the secret, it will be in your power, and our correspondence will always serve to show that it was only at my earnest request, annexed as the condition of bringing the play forward, that you gave it your name—a circumstance which, with all the attending particulars, will prove plainly that there was no assumption on your part.

"A beautiful drama might be made on the concealment of the Scotch regalia during the troubles. But it would interfere with the democratic spirit of the times, and would probably

——'By party rage,
Or right or wrong, be hooted from the stage.'

"I will never forgive you if you let any false idea of my authorial feelings prevent your acting in this affair as if you were the real parent, not the godfather of the piece. Our facetious friend J. B. knows nought of such a matter being *en train*, and never will know. I am delighted to hear my windows are finished. Yours very truly, WALTER SCOTT."

To Mr Laidlaw, Kaeside.

"Wednesday. [Feb. 1818].

"Dear Willie,

"I am not desirous to buy more land at present, unless I were to deal with Mr Rutherford or Hicton, and I would rather deal with them next year than this, when I would have all my payments made for what I am now buying. Three or four such years as the last would enable me with prudence and propriety to ask Nicol * himself to flit and remove.

" I like the idea of the birch-hedge much, and if intermixed with holly and thorns, I think it might make an impenetrable thicket, having all the advantages of a hedge without the formality. I fancy you will also need a great number of (black) Italian poplars which are among the most useful and best-growers, as well as most beautiful of plants which love a wet soil.

" I am glad the saws are going.† We may begin by and by with wrights, but I cannot but think that a handy labourer might be taught to work at them. I shall insist on Tom learning the process perfectly himself.

" As to the darkness of the garrets, they are intended for the accommodation of travelling geniuses, poets, painters, and so forth, and a little obscurity will refresh their shattered brains. I daresay Lauchie ‡ will *shave* his knoll, if it is required—it may to the barber's with the Laird's hebdomadal beard—and Packwood would have thought it the easier job of the two.

" I saw Blackwood yesterday, and Hogg the day before, and I understand from them you think of resigning the Chronicle department of the Magazine. Blackwood told me that if you did not like that part of the duty, he would consider himself accountable for the same sum he had specified to you for any other articles you might communicate from time to time. He proposes that Hogg should do the Chronicle: He will not do it so well as you, for he wants judgment and caution, and likes to have the appearance of eccentricity where eccentricity is least graceful; that, however, is Blackwood's affair. If you really do not like the Chronicle, there can be no harm in your giving it up. What strikes me is, that there is a something certain in having such a department to conduct, whereas you may sometimes find yourself at a loss when you have to cast about for a subject every month. Blackwood *is* rather in a bad pickle just now—sent to Coventry by the trade, as the booksellers call themselves, and all about the parody of the two beasts.* Surely these gentlemen think themselves rather formed of porcelain clay than of common potter's ware. Dealing in satire against all others, their own dignity suffers so cruelly from an ill-imagined joke! If B. had good books to sell, he might set them all at defiance. His Magazine does well, and beats Constable's; but we will talk of this when we meet.

---

* Mr Nicol Mylne of Faldonside. This gentleman's property is a valuable and extensive one, situated immediately to the westward of Abbotsford; and Scott continued, year after year, to dream of adding it also to his own.

† A saw-mill had just been erected at Toftfield.

‡ A cocklaird adjoining Abbotsford at the eastern side. His farm is properly *Lochbreist;* but in the neighbourhood he was generally known as *Laird Lauchie*—or *Lauchie Langlegs.* Washington Irving describes him, in his " Abbotsford," with high gusto. He was a most absurd original.

---

* An article in one of the early numbers of Blackwood's Magazine, entitled *The Chaldee MS.*, in which the literati and booksellers of Edinburgh were quizzed *en masse*—Scott himself among the rest. It was in this lampoon that Constable first saw himself designated in print by the *sobriquet* of " The Crafty," long before bestowed on him by one of his own most eminent Whig supporters; but nothing nettled him so much as the passages in which he and Blackwood are represented entreating the support of Scott for their respective Magazines, and waved off by " the Great Magician " in the same identical phrases of contemptuous indifference. The description of Constable's visit to Abbotsford may be worth transcribing — for Sir David Wilkie, who was present when Scott read it, says he was almost choked with laughter, and he afterwards confessed that the Chaldean author had given a sufficiently accurate version of what really passed on the occasion :—

" 26. But when the Spirits were gone, he (The Crafty) said unto himself, I will arise and go unto a magician, which is of my friends: of a surety he will devise some remedy, and free me out of all my distresses.

"As for Whiggery in general, I can only say, that as no man can be said to be utterly overset until his rump has been higher than his head, so I cannot read in history of any free state which has been brought to slavery until the rascal and uninstructed populace had had their short hour of anarchical government, which naturally leads to the stern repose of military despotism. Property, morals, education, are the proper qualifica-

"27. So he arose and came unto that great magician, which hath his dwelling in the old fastness, hard by the River Jordan, which is by the Border.

"28. And the magician opened his mouth and said, Lo! my heart wisheth thy good, and let the thing prosper which is in thy hands to do it.

"29. But thou seest that my hands are full of working, and my labour is great. For, lo, I have to feed all the people of my land, and none knoweth whence his food cometh; but each man openeth his mouth, and my hand filleth it with pleasant things.

"30. Moreover, thine adversary also is of my familiars.

"31. The land is before thee: draw thou up thine hosts for the battle on the mount of Proclamation, and defy boldly thine enemy, which hath his camp in the place of Princes; quit ye as men, and let favour be shown unto him which is most valiant.

"32. Yet be thou silent; peradventure will I help thee some little.

"33. But the man which is Crafty saw that the magician loved him not. For he knew him of old, and they had had many dealings; and he perceived that he would not assist him in the day of his adversity.

"34. So he turned about, and went out of his fastness. And he shook the dust from his feet, and said, Behold, I have given this magician much money, yet see now, he hath utterly deserted me. Verily, my fine gold hath perished."—CHAP. III.

tions for those who should hold political rights, and extending them very widely greatly lessens the chance of these qualifications being found in electors. Look at the sort of persons chosen at elections, where the franchise is very general, and you will find either fools who are content to flatter the passions of the mob for a little transient popularity, or knaves who pander to their follies, that they make their necks a footstool for their own promotion. With these convictions I am very jealous of Whiggery, under all modifications, and I must say my acquaintance with the total want of principle in some of its warmest professors does not tend to recommend it. Somewhat too much of this. My compliments to the goodwife. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Wednesday. [Feb. 1818.]

"Dear Willie,

"I have no idea Usher* will take the sheep land again, nor would I press it on him. As my circumstances stand, immediate revenue is much less my object than the real improvement of this property, which amuses me besides; our wants are amply supplied by my L.1600 a-year official income; nor have we a wish or a motive to extend our expenses beyond that of the decencies and hospitality of our station in life; so that my other resources remain for buying land in future, or improving what we have. No doubt Abbotsford, in maintaining our establishment during the summer, may be reckoned L.150

---

* John Usher, the ex-proprietor of Toftfield, was eventually Scott's tenant on part of those lands for many years. He was a man of far superior rank and intelligence to the rest of the displaced lairds—and came presently to be one of Scott's trusty rural friends, and a frequent companion of his sports.

or L.200 saved on what we must otherwise buy, and if we could arrange to have mutton and beef occasionally, it would be a still greater saving. All this you will consider: for Tom, thoroughly honest and very clever in his way, has no kind of generalizing, and would often like to save sixpence in his own department at the expense of my paying five shillings in another. This is his fault, and when you join to it a Scotch slovenliness which leads him to see things half-finished without pain or anxiety, I do not know any other he has—but such as they are these must be guarded against. For our housemaid (for housekeeper we must not call her), I should like much a hawk of a nest so good as that you mention; but would not such a place be rather beneath her views? Her duty would be to look to scrupulous cleanliness within doors, and employ her leisure in spinning, or plain-work, as wanted. When we came out for a blink, she would be expected to cook a little in a plain way, and play maid of all works; when we were stationary, she would assist the housemaid and superintend the laundry. Probably your aunt's granddaughter will have pretensions to something better than this; but as we are to be out on the 12th March, we will talk it over. Assuredly a well-connected steady person would be of the greatest consequence to us. I like your plan of pitting much, and to compromise betwixt you and Tom, do one half with superior attention, and slit in the others for mere nurses. But I am no friend to that same slitting.

"I adhere to trying a patch or two of larches of a quarter of an acre each upon the Athole plan, by way of experiment. We can plant them up if they do not thrive. On the whole, three-and-a-half feet is, I think, the right distance. I have no fear of the ground being impoverished. Trees are not like arable crops, which necessarily derive their sustenance from the superficial earth—the roots of trees go far and wide, and, if incommoded by a neighbour, they send out suckers to procure nourishment elsewhere. They never hurt each other till their tops interfere, which may be easily prevented by timely weeding.

"I rejoice in the sawmill. Have you settled with Harper? and how do Ogg and Bashan[*] come on? I cannot tell you how delighted I am with the account Hogg gives me of Mr Grieve. The great Cameron was chaplain in the house of my great something grandfather, and so I hope Mr Grieve will be mine. If, as the King of Prussia said to Rousseau, 'a little persecution is necessary to make his home entirely to his mind,' he shall have it; and what persecutors seldom promise, I will stop whenever he is tired of it. I have a pair of thumbikins also much at his service, if he requires their assistance to glorify God and the Covenant. Sincerely, I like enthusiasm of every kind so well, especially when united with worth of character, that I shall be delighted with this old gentleman. Ever yours,

W. SCOTT."

The last paragraph of this letter refers to an uncle of Laidlaw's (the father of Hogg's friend John Grieve), who at this time thought of occupying a cottage on Scott's estate. He was a preacher of the Cameronian sect, and had long ministered to a very small remnant of "the hill-folk" scattered among the wilds of Ettrick. He was a very good man, and had a most venerable and apostolical benignity of aspect; but his prejudices were as extravagant as those of Cameron his patriarch himself could have been. The project of his removal to Tweedside was never realized.

---

[*] A yoke of oxen.

The following admirable letter was written at the request of Messrs Constable, who had, on Scott's recommendation, undertaken the publication of Mr Maturin's novel, "Women, or *Pour et Contre*." The reverend author's "Bertram" had, it may be remembered, undergone some rather rough usage in Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria;" and he was now desirous to revenge himself by a preface of the polemical sort:—

To the Rev. C. R. Maturin, Dublin.

"26th February, 1818.

"Dear Sir,

"I am going to claim the utmost and best privilege of sincere friendship and good-will, that of offering a few words of well-meant advice; and you may be sure that the occasion seems important to induce me to venture so far upon your tolerance. It respects the preface to your work, which Constable and Co. have sent to me. It is as well written as that sort of thing can be; but will you forgive me if I say—it is too much in the tone of the offence which gave rise to it, to be agreeable either to good taste or to general feeling. Coleridge's work has been little read or heard of, and has made no general impression whatever—certainly no impression unfavourable to you or your Play. In the opinion, therefore, of many, you will be resenting an injury of which they are unacquainted with the existence. If I see a man beating another unmercifully, I am apt to condemn him upon the first blush of the business, and hardly excuse him though I may afterwards learn he had ample provocation. Besides, your diatribe is not *hujus loci*. We take up a novel for amusement, and this current of controversy breaks out upon us like a stream of lava out of the side of a beautiful green hill; men will say you should have reserved your disputes for re-views or periodical publications, and they will sympathize less with your anger, because they will not think the time proper for expressing it. We are bad judges, bad physicians, and bad divines in our own case; but, above all, we are seldom able, when injured or insulted, to judge of the degree of sympathy which the world will bear in our resentment and our retaliation. The instant, however, that such degree of sympathy is exceeded, we hurt ourselves and not our adversary; I am so convinced of this, and so deeply fixed in the opinion, that besides the uncomfortable feelings which are generated in the course of literary debate, a man lowers his estimation in the public eye by engaging in such controversy, that, since I have been dipped in ink, I have suffered no personal attacks (and I have been honoured with them of all descriptions) to provoke me to reply. A man will certainly be vexed on such occasions, and I have wished to have the knaves *where the muircock was the bailie*—or, as *you* would say, *upon the sod*—but I never let the thing cling to my mind, and always adhered to my resolution, that if my writings and tenor of life did not confute such attacks, my words never should. Let me entreat you to view Coleridge's violence as a thing to be contemned, not retaliated—the opinion of a British public may surely be set in honest opposition to that of one disappointed and wayward man. You should also consider, *en bon Chrétien*, that Coleridge has had some room to be spited at the world, and you are, I trust, to continue to be a favourite with the public—so that you should totally neglect and despise criticism, however virulent, which arises out of his bad fortune and your good.

" I have only to add, that Messrs Constable and Co. are seriously alarmed for the effects of the preface upon the public mind as unfavourable to the work. In this they must be tolerable judges, for their experience as to popular feeling is very great; and as they have met your wishes, in all the course of the transaction, perhaps you will be disposed to give some weight to their opinion upon a point like this. Upon my own part I can only say, that I have no habits of friendship, and scarce those of acquaintance with Coleridge—I have not even read his autobiography—but I consider him as a man of genius, struggling with bad habits and difficult circumstances. It is, however, entirely upon your account that I take the liberty of stating an opinion on a subject of such delicacy. I should wish you to give your excellent talents fair play, and to ride this race without carrying any superfluous weight; and I am so well acquainted with my old friend, the public, that I could bet a thousand pounds to a shilling that the preface (if that controversial part of it is not cancelled) will greatly prejudice your novel.

"I will not ask your forgiveness for the freedom I have used, for I am sure you will not suspect me of any motives but those which arise from regard to your talents and person; but I shall be glad to hear (whether you follow my advice or no) that you are not angry with me for having volunteered to offer it.

"My health is, I think, greatly improved; I have had some returns of my spasmodic affection, but tolerable in degree, and yielding to medicine. I hope gentle exercise and the air of my hills will set me up this summer. I trust you will soon be out now. I have delayed reading the sheets in progress after vol. I., that I might enjoy them when collected. Ever yours, &c.,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Mr Laidlaw.

"Edinburgh, Wednesday. [March 1818.]

"Dear Willie,

"I am delighted to hear the plantings get on so well. The weather here has been cruelly changeable —fresh one day—frost the next—snow the third. This morning the snow lay three inches thick, and before noon it was gone, and blowing a tempest. Many of the better ranks are ill of the typhus fever, and some deaths. How do your poor folks come on? Let Tom advance you money when it is wanted. I do not propose, like the heroine of a novel, to convert the hovels of want into the abodes of elegant plenty, but we have enough to spare to relieve actual distress, and do not wish to economize where we can find out (which is difficult) where the assistance is instantly useful.

"Don't let Tom forget hedgerow trees, which he is very unwilling to remember; and also to plant birches, oaks, elms, and suchlike round-headed trees along the verges of the Kaeside plantations; they make a beautiful outline, and also a sort of fence, and were not planted last year because the earth at the sunk fences was too newly travelled. This should be mixed with various bushes, as hollies, thorns, so as to make a wild hedge, or thickety obstruction to the inroads of cattle. A few sweetbriers, alders, honeysuckles, laburnums, &c., should be thrown in. A verdant screen may be made in this way of the wildest and most beautiful description, which should never be clipt, only pruned, allowing the loose branches to drop over those that are taken away. Tom is very costive about trees, and talks only of 300 poplars. I shall send at least double that number; also some hag-berries, &c. He thinks he is saving me money, when he is starving my projects; but he is a pearl of honesty and good intention, and I like him the better for needing driving where expense is likely. Ever yours,

W. Scott."

To John Murray, Esq., Albemarle Street, London.

"Abbotsford, 23d March, 1818.

"Dear Murray,

'Grieve not for me, my dearest dear,
I am not dead but sleepeth here'—

"I have little to plead for myself, but the old and vile apologies of laziness and indisposition. I think I have been so unlucky of late as to have always the will to work when sitting at the desk hurts me, and the irresistible propensity to be lazy, when I might, like the man whom Hogarth introduces into Bridewell with his hands strapped up against the wall, 'better work than stand thus.' I laid Kirkton* aside half finished, from a desire to get the original edition of the lives of Cameron, &c., by Patrick Walker, which I had not seen since a boy, and now I have got it, and find, as I suspected, that some curious *morceaux* have been cut out by subsequent editors.† I will, without loss of time, finish the article, which I think you will like. Blackwood kidnapped an article for his Magazine on the Frankenstein

---

[*] Scott's article on Kirkton's History of the Church of Scotland, edited by Mr C. K. Sharpe, appeared in the 36th number of the Quarterly Review. See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xix. p. 213.

[†] Scott expressed great satisfaction on seeing the Lives of the Covenanters — Cameron, Peden, Semple, Wellwood, Cargill, Smith, Renwick, &c., reprinted without mutilation in the "Biographia Presbyteriana. Edin. 1827." The publisher of this collection was the late Mr John Stevenson, long chief clerk to John Ballantyne, and usually styled by Scott "True Jock," in opposition to one of his old master's many *aliases*—viz.: "Leein' Johnnie."

story,* which I intended for you. A very old friend and school companion of mine, and a gallant soldier, if ever there was one, Sir Howard Douglas, has asked me to review his work on Military Bridges. I must get a friend's assistance for the scientific part, and add some balaam of mine own (as printers' devils say) to make up four or five pages. I have no objection to attempt Lord Orford if I have time, and find I can do it with ease. Though far from admiring his character, I have always had a high opinion of his talents, and am well acquainted with his works. The letters you have published are, I think, his very best—lively, entertaining, and unaffected.† I am greatly obliged to you for these and other literary treasures, which I owe to your goodness from time to time. Although not thankfully acknowledged as they should be in course, these things are never thanklessly received.

"I could have sworn that Beppo was founded on Whistlecraft, as both were on Anthony Hall,‡ who, like Beppo, had more wit than grace.

I am not, however, in spirits at present for treating either these worthies, or my friend Rose,§ though few have warmer wishes to any of the trio. But this confounded changeable weather has twice within this fortnight brought back my cramp in the stomach. Adieu. My next shall be with a packet. Yours truly,

W. SCOTT."

In the next letter we have Scott's lamentation over

* See Scott's Prose Miscellanies, vol. 18, p. 250.

† The Letters of Horace Walpole to George Montague.

‡ *Anthony Hall* is only known as Editor of one of Leland's works: I have no doubt Scott was thinking of *John Hall Stevenson*, author of "Crazy Tales;" the friend, and (it is said) the *Eugenius* of Sterne.

§ I believe Mr Rose's "Court and Parliament of Beasts" is here alluded to.

the death of Mrs Murray Keith—the Mrs Bethune Baliol of his Chronicles of the Canongate. The person alluded to under the designation of "Prince of the Black Marble Islands," was Mr George Bullock, already often mentioned as, with Terry and Mr Atkinson, consulted about all the arrangements of the rising house at Abbotsford. Scott gave him this title from the Arabian Nights, on occasion of his becoming the lessee of some marble quarries in the Isle of Anglesea.

To D. Terry, Esq. London.

"April 30th, 1818. Selkirk.

"My dear Terry,

"Your packet arrived this morning. I was much disappointed not to find the Prince of the Black Islands' plan in it, nor have I heard a word from him since anent it, or anent the still more essential articles of doors and windows. I heard from Hector MacDonald Buchanan, that the said doors and windows were packing a fortnight since, but there are no news of them. Surely our friend's heart has grown as hard as his materials; or the spell of the enchantress, which confined itself to the extremities of his predecessor, has extended over his whole person. Mr Atkinson has kept tryste charmingly, and the cieling of the diningroom will be superb. I have got, I know not how many casts from Melrose and other places, of pure Gothic antiquity. I must leave this on the 12th, and I could bet a trifle the doors, &c. will arrive the very day I set out, and be all put up *à la bonne aventure*. Mean time I am keeping open house, not much to my convenience, and I am afraid I shall be stopped in my plastering by the want of these matters. The exposed state of my house has led to a mysterious disturbance. The night before last we were awaked by a violent noise, like drawing heavy boards along the new part of the house. I fancied something had fallen, and thought no more about it. This was about *two* in the morning. Last night, at the same witching hour, the very same noise occurred. Mrs S., as you know, is rather *timbersome*, so up got I, with Beardie's broadsword under my arm,

> 'So bolt upright,
> And ready to fight.'

But nothing was out of order, neither can I discover what occasioned the disturbance. However, I went to bed, grumbling against Tenterden Street* and all its works. If there was no entrance but the key-hole, I should warrant myself against the ghosts. We have a set of idle fellows called workmen about us, which is a better way of accounting for nocturnal noises than any that is to be found in Baxter or Glanville.

"When you see Mr Atkinson, will you ask him how far he is satisfied with the arch between the armoury and the anteroom, and whether it pleases him as it now stands? I have a brave old oaken cabinet, as black as ebony, 300 years old at least, which will occupy one side of the anteroom for the present. It is seven feet and a half long, about eighteen inches deep, and upwards of six feet high—a fine stand for china, &c.

"You will be sorry to hear that we have lost our excellent old friend, Mrs Murray Keith. She enjoyed all her spirits and excellent faculties till within two days of her death, when she was seized with a feverish complaint, which eighty-two years were not calculated to resist. Much tradition, and of the very best kind, has died with this excellent old lady; one of the few persons whose spirits and cleanliness, and freshness of mind and body, made old age lovely and desirable. In the general case it seems scarce endurable.

---

* Bullock's manufactory was in this street.

"It seems odd to me that Rob Roy* should have made good fortune; pray let me know something of its history. There is in Jedediah's present work a thing capable of being woven out a Bourgeoise tragedy. I think of contriving that it shall be in your hands some time before the public see it, that you may try to operate upon it yourself. This would not be difficult, as vol. 4, and part of 3d contain a different story. *Avowedly* I will never write for the stage; if I do, 'call me *horse.*' And indeed I feel severely the want of knowledge of theatrical business and effect: however, something we will do. I am writing in the noise and babble of a head-court of freeholders, therefore my letter is incoherent, and therefore it is written also on long paper; but therefore, moreover, it will move by frank, as the member is here, and stands upon his popularity. Kind compliments to Mrs Terry and Walter. Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the morning that Mr Terry received the foregoing letter in London, Mr William Erskine was breakfasting with him; and the chief subject of their conversation was the sudden death of George Bullock, which had occurred on the same night, and as nearly as they could ascertain, at the very hour when Scott was roused from his sleep by the "mysterious disturbance" here described, and sallied from his chamber with old Beardie's Killiecrankie claymore in his hand. This coincidence, when Scott received Erskine's minute detail of what had happened in Tenterden street, made a much stronger impression on his mind than might be gathered from the tone of an ensuing communication.

---

* A drama founded on the novel of Rob Roy had been produced, with great success, on the London stage.

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, 4th May, 1818.

"Dear Terry,

"I received with the greatest surprise, and the most sincere distress, the news of poor George Bullock's death. In the full career of honourable industry,—distinguished by his uncommon taste and talent,—esteemed by all who transacted business with him,—and loved by those who had the pleasure of his more intimate acquaintance,—I can scarce conceive a more melancholy summons. It comes as a particular shock to me, because I had, particularly of late, so much associated his idea with the improvements here, in which his kind and enthusiastic temper led him to take such interest; and in looking at every unfinished or projected circumstance, I feel an impression of melancholy which will for some time take away the pleasure I have found in them. I liked George Bullock because he had no trumpery selfishness about his heart, taste, or feelings. Pray let me know about the circumstances of his family, &c. I feel most sincerely interested in all that concerns him. It must have been a dreadful surprise to Mr Atkinson and you who lived with him so much. I need not, I am sure, beg you to be in no hurry about my things. The confusion must be cruelly great, without any friend adding to it; and in fact, at this moment, I am very indifferent on the subject. The poor kind fellow! He took so much notice of little Charles, and was so domesticated with us all, that I really looked with a schoolboy's anxiety for his being here in the season, to take his own quiet pleasures, and to forward mine. But God's will be done. All that surviving friends can do upon such a loss is, if possible, to love each other still better. I beg to be kindly remembered to Mrs Terry and Monsieur Walter. Ever most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 16th May, 1818.

"My dear Terry,

"Mr Nasmyth* has obligingly given me an opportunity of writing to you a few lines, as he is setting out for London. I cannot tell you how much I continue to be grieved for our kind-hearted and enthusiastic friend Bullock. I trust he has left his family comfortably settled, though with so many plans which required his active and intelligent mind to carry them through, one has natural apprehensions upon that score. When you can with propriety make enquiry how my matters stand, I should be glad to know. Hector Macdonald tells me that my doors and windows were ready packed, in which case, perhaps, the sooner they are embarked the better, not only for safety, but because they can only be in the way, and the money will now be the more acceptable. Poor Bullock had also the measures for my chimney-pieces, for grates of different kinds, and orders for beds, dining-room tables and chairs. But how far these are in progress of being executed, or whether they can now be executed, I must leave to your judgment and enquiry. Your good sense and delicacy will understand the *façon de faire* better than I can point it out. I shall never have the pleasure in these things that I expected.

"I have just left Abbotsford to attend the summer session—left it when the leaves were coming out—the most delightful season for a worshipper of the country like me. The Home-bank, which we saw at first green with turnips, will now hide a man somewhat taller than Johnnie Ballantyne in its shades. In fact, the trees cover the ground, and have a very pretty bosky effect; from six years to ten or twelve, I think wood is as beautiful as ever it is afterwards until it figures as aged and magnificent. Your hobble-de-hoy tree of twenty or twenty-five years' standing is neither so beautiful as in its infancy, nor so respectable as in its age.

---

* Mr Alexander Nasmyth, an eminent landscape painter of Edinburgh—the father of Mrs Terry.

"Counsellor Erskine is returned much pleased with your hospitality, and giving an excellent account of you. Were you not struck with the fantastical coincidence of our nocturnal disturbances at Abbotsford with the melancholy event that followed? I protest to you the noise resembled half-a-dozen men hard at work putting up boards and furniture, and nothing can be more certain than that there was nobody on the premises at the time. With a few additional touches, the story would figure in Glanville or Aubrey's Collection. In the mean time, you may set it down with poor Dubisson's warnings,* as a remarkable coincidence coming under your own observation. I trust we shall see you this season. I think we could hammer a neat *comedie bourgeoise* out of the Heart of Mid-Lothian. Mrs Scott and family join in kind compliments to Mrs Terry; and I am, ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

It appears from one of these letters to Terry, that, so late as the 30th of April, Scott still designed to include two separate stories in the second series of the Tales of my Landlord. But he must have changed his plan soon after that date; since the four volumes, entirely occupied with the Heart of Mid-Lothian, were before the public in the course of June. The story thus deferred, in consequence of the extent to which that of Jeanie Deans grew on his hands, was the Bride of Lammermoor.

---

* *See* ante, vol. ii., p. 344.

CHAPTER V.

MAY, 1818—DINNER AT MR HOME DRUMMOND'S—SCOTT'S EDINBURGH DEN—DETAILS OF HIS DOMESTIC LIFE IN CASTLE STREET—HIS SUNDAY DINNERS—HIS EVENING DRIVES, ETC.—HIS CONDUCT IN THE GENERAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH—DINNERS AT JOHN BALLANTYNE'S VILLA—AND AT JAMES BALLANTYNE'S IN ST JOHN STREET ON THE APPEARANCE OF A NEW NOVEL—ANECDOTES OF THE BALLANTYNES, AND OF CONSTABLE.

On the 12th of May, as we have seen, Scott left Abbotsford, for the summer session in Edinburgh.

At this moment, his position, take it for all in all, was, I am inclined to believe, what no other man had ever won for himself by the pen alone. His works were the daily food, not only of his countrymen, but of all educated Europe. His society was courted by whatever England could show of eminence. Station, power, wealth, beauty, and genius strove with each other in every demonstration of respect and worship—and, a few political fanatics and envious poetasters apart, wherever he appeared in town or in country, whoever had Scotch blood in him, "gentle or simple," felt it move more rapidly through his veins when he was in the presence of Scott. To descend to what many looked on as higher things, he considered himself, and was considered by all about him, as rapidly consolidating a large fortune:—the annual profits of his novels alone had, for several years, been not less than L.10,000: his domains were daily increased—his castle was rising—and perhaps few doubted that ere long he might receive from the just favour of his Prince some distinction in the way of external rank, such as had seldom before been dreamt of as the possible consequence of a mere literary celebrity. It was about this time that the compiler of these pages first had the opportunity of observing the plain easy modesty which had survived the many temptations of such a career; and the kindness of heart pervading, in all circumstances, his gentle deportment, which made him the rare, perhaps the solitary, example of a man signally elevated from humble beginnings, and loved more and more by his earliest friends and connexions, in proportion as he had fixed on himself the homage of the great, and the wonder of the world.

It was during the sitting of the General Assembly of the Kirk in May 1818, that I first had the honour of meeting him in private society: the party was not a large one, at the house of a much-valued common friend—Mr Home Drummond of Blair Drummond, the grandson of Lord Kames. Mr Scott, ever apt to consider too favourably the literary efforts of others, and more especially of very young persons, received me, when I was presented to him, with a cordiality which I had not been prepared to expect from one filling a station so exalted. This, however, is the same story that every individual, who ever met him under similar circumstances, has had to tell. When the ladies retired from the dinner-table I happened to sit next him; and he, having heard that I had lately returned from a tour in Germany, made that country and its recent literature the subject of some conversation. In the course of it, I told him that when, on reaching the inn at Weimar, I asked the waiter, whether Goethe was then in the town, the man stared as if he had not heard the name before; and that on my repeating the question, adding *Goethe der grosse dichter* (the great poet), he shook his head as doubtfully as before—until the landlady solved our difficulties, by suggesting that perhaps the traveller might mean "the *Herr Geheimer-Rath* (Privy-Counsellor) *Von Goethe.*" Scott seemed amused with this, and said, "I hope you will come one of these days and see me at Abbotsford; and when you reach Selkirk or Melrose, be sure you ask even the landlady for nobody but *the Sheriff.*" He appeared particularly interested when I described Goethe as I first saw him, alighting from a carriage, crammed with wild plants and herbs which he had picked up in the course of his morning's botanizing among the hills above Jena. "I am glad," said he, "that my old master has pursuits somewhat akin to my own. I am no botanist, properly speaking; and though a dweller on the banks of the Tweed, shall never be knowing about Flora's beauties;* but how I should like to have a talk with him about trees!" I mentioned how much any one must be struck with the majestic beauty of Goethe's countenance—(the noblest certainly by far that I have ever yet seen)—"Well," said he, "the grandest demigod I ever saw was Dr Carlyle, minister of Musselburgh, commonly called *Jupiter Carlyle*, from having sat more than once for the king of gods and men to Gavin Hamilton—and a shrewd, clever old carle was he, no doubt, but no more a poet than his precentor. As for poets, I have seen, I believe, all the best of our own time and country—and, though Burns had the most glorious eyes imaginable, I never thought any of them would come up to an artist's notion of the character, except Byron." A reverend gentleman present, (I think, Principal Nicoll of St Andrews), expressed his regret that he had never seen Lord Byron. "And the prints," resumed Scott, "give one no impression of him—the lustre is there, Doctor, but it is not lighted up. Byron's countenance is *a thing to dream of.* A certain fair lady, whose name has been too often mentioned in connexion with his, told a friend of mine that, when she first saw Byron it was in a crowded room, and she did not know who it was, but her eyes were instantly nailed, and she said to herself *that pale face is my fate.* And poor soul, if a godlike face and godlike powers could have made any excuse for devilry, to be sure she had one." In the course of this talk, an old friend and schoolfellow of Scott's asked him across the table if he had any faith in the antique busts of Homer? "No, truly," he answered, smiling, "for if there had been either limners or stuccoyers worth their salt in those days, the owner of such a headpiece would never have had to trail the poke. They would have alimented the honest man decently among them for a lay-figure."

---

* "What beauties does Flora disclose,
How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed." &c.
—CRAWFORD.

A few days after this, I received a communication from the Messrs Ballantyne, to the effect that Mr Scott's various avocations had prevented him from fulfilling his agreement with them as to the historical department of the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1816, and that it would be acceptable to him as well as them, if I could undertake to supply it in the course of the autumn. This proposal was agreed to on my part, and I had consequently occasion to meet him pretty often during that summer session. He told me that if the war had gone on, he should have liked to do the historical summary as before; but that the prospect of having no events to record but radical riots, and the passing or rejecting of corn bills and poor bills, sickened him; that his health was no longer what it had been; and that though he did not mean to give over writing altogether—(here he smiled significantly, and glanced his eye towards a pile of MS. on the desk by him)—he thought himself now entitled to write nothing but what would rather be an amusement than a fatigue to him—"*Juniores ad labores.*"

He at this time occupied as his *den* a square small room, behind the dining parlour in Castle Street. It had but a single Venetian window, opening on a patch of turf not much larger than itself, and the aspect of the place was on the whole sombrous. The walls were entirely clothed with books; most of them folios and quartos, and all in that complete state of repair which at a glance reveals a tinge of bibliomania. A dozen volumes or so, needful for immediate purposes of reference, were placed close by him on a small movable frame—something like a dumb-waiter. All the rest were in their proper niches, and wherever a volume had been lent, its room was occupied by a wooden block of the same size, having a card with the name of the borrower and date of the loan, tacked on its front. The old bindings had obviously been retouched and regilt in the most approved manner; the new, when the books were of any mark, were rich but never gaudy—a large proportion of blue morocco—all stamped with his *device* of the portcullis, and its motto *clausus tutus ero*—being an anagram of his name in Latin. Every case and shelf was accurately lettered, and the works arranged systematically; history and biography on one side—poetry and the drama on another—law books and dictionaries behind his own chair. The only table was a massive piece of furniture which he had had constructed on the model of one at Rokeby; with a desk and all its appurtenances on either side, that an amanuensis might work opposite to him when he chose; and with small tiers of drawers, reaching all round to the floor. The top displayed a goodly array of session papers, and on the desk below were, besides the MS. at which he was working, sundry parcels of letters, proof-sheets, and so forth, all neatly done up with red tape. His own writing apparatus was a very handsome old box, richly carved, lined with crimson velvet, and containing ink-bottles, taper-stand, &c. in silver—the whole in such order that it might have come from the silversmith's window half an hour before. Besides his own huge elbow chair, there were but two others in the room, and one of these seemed, from its position, to be reserved exclusively for the amanuensis. I observed, during the first evening I spent with him in this *sanctum*, that while he talked, his hands were hardly ever idle. Sometimes he folded letter-covers—sometimes he twisted paper into matches, performing both tasks with great mechanical expertness and nicety; and when there was no loose paper fit to be so dealt with, he snapped his fingers, and the noble Maida aroused himself from his lair on the hearth-rug, and laid his head across his master's knees, to be caressed and fondled. The room had no space for pictures except one, an original portrait of Claverhouse, which hung over the chimneypiece, with a Highland target on either side, and broadswords and dirks (each having its own story), disposed star-fashion round them. A few green tin-boxes, such as solicitors keep title-deeds in, were piled over each other on one side of the window; and on the top of these lay a fox's tail, mounted on an antique silver handle, wherewith, as often as he had occasion to take down a book, he gently brushed the dust off the upper leaves before opening it. I think I have mentioned all the furniture of the room except a sort of ladder, low, broad, well-carpeted, and strongly guarded with oaken rails, by which he helped himself to books from his higher shelves. On the top step of this convenience, Hinse of Hinsfeldt,—(so called from one of the German *Kinder-märchen*)—a venerable tom-cat, fat and sleek, and no longer very locomotive, usually lay watching the proceedings of his master and Maida with an air of dignified equanimity; but when Maida chose to leave the party, he signified his inclinations by thumping the door with his huge paw, as violently as ever a fashionable footman handled a knocker in Grosvenor Square; the Sheriff rose and opened it for him with courteous alacrity,—and then Hinse came down purring from his perch, and mounted guard by the foot-stool, *vice* Maida absent upon furlough. Whatever discourse might be passing was broken, every now and then, by some affectionate apostrophe to these four-footed friends. He said they understood every thing he said to them, and I believe they did understand a great deal of it. But at all events, dogs and cats, like children, have some infallible tact for discovering at once who is, and who is not, really fond of their company; and I venture to say, Scott was never five minutes in any room before the little pets of the family, whether dumb or lisping, had found out his kindness for all their generation.

I never thought it lawful to keep a journal of what passes in private society, so that no one need expect from the sequel of this narrative any detailed record of Scott's familiar talk. What fragments of it have happened to adhere to a tolerably retentive memory, and may be put into black and white without wounding any feelings which my friend, were he alive, would have wished to spare, I shall introduce as the occasion suggests or serves; but I disclaim on the threshold any thing more than this; and I also wish to enter a protest once for all against the general fidelity of several literary gentlemen who have kindly forwarded to me private lucubrations of theirs, designed to *Boswellize* Scott, and which they may probably publish hereafter. To report conversations fairly, it is a necessary prerequisite that we should be completely familiar with all the interlocutors, and understand thoroughly all their minutest relations, and points of common knowledge, and common feeling, with each other. He who does not, must be perpetually in danger of misinterpreting sportive allusion into serious statement; and the man who was only recalling, by some jocular phrase or half-phrase, to an old companion, some trivial reminiscence of their boyhood or youth, may be represented as expressing, upon some person or incident casually tabled, an opinion which he had never framed, or if he had, would never have given words to in any mixed assemblage—not even among what the world calls *friends* at his own board. In proportion as a man is witty and humorous, there will always be about him and his a widening maze and wilderness of cues and catchwords, which the uninitiated will, if they are bold enough to try interpretation, construe, ever and anon, egregiously amiss—not seldom into arrant falsity. For this one reason, to say nothing of many others, I consider no man justified in journalizing what he sees and hears in a domestic circle where he is not thoroughly at home; and I think there are still higher and better reasons why he should not do so where he is.

Before I ever met Scott in private, I had, of course, heard many people describe and discuss his style of conversation. Every body seemed to agree that it overflowed with hearty good humour, as well as plain unaffected good sense and sagacity; but I had heard not a few persons of undoubted ability and accomplishment maintain, that the genius of the great poet and novelist rarely, if ever, revealed itself in his talk. It is needless to say, that the persons I allude to were all his own countrymen, and themselves imbued, more or less, with the conversational habits derived from a system of education in which the study of metaphysics occupies a very large share of attention. The best table-talk of Edinburgh was, and probably still is, in a very great measure made up of brilliant disquisition—such as might be transferred without alteration to a professor's note-book, or the pages of a critical Review—and of sharp word-catchings, ingenious thrusting and parrying of dialectics, and all the quips and quibblets of bar pleading. It was the talk of a society to which lawyers and lecturers had, for at least a hundred years, given the tone. From the date of the Union Edinburgh ceased to be the headquarters of the Scotch nobility—and long before the time of which I speak they had all but entirely abandoned it as a place of residence. I think I never knew above two or three of the Peerage to have houses there at the same time—and these were usually among the poorest and most insignificant of their order. The wealthier gentry had followed their example. Very few of that class ever spent any considerable part of the year in Edinburgh, except for the purposes of educating their children, or superintending the progress of a lawsuit; and these were not more likely than a score or two of comatose and lethargic old Indians, to make head against the established influences of academical and forensic celebrity. Now Scott's tastes and resources had not much in common with those who had inherited and preserved the chief authority in this provincial hierarchy of rhetoric. He was highly amused with watching their dexterous logomachies—but his delight in such displays arose mainly, I cannot doubt, from the fact of their being, both as to subject-matter and style and method, remote *a Scævolæ studiis.* He sat by, as he would have done at a stage-play or a fencing-match, enjoying and applauding the skill exhibited, but without feeling much ambition to parade himself as a rival either of the foil or the buskin. I can easily believe, therefore, that in the earlier part of his life—before the blaze of universal fame had overawed local prejudice, and a new generation, accustomed to hear of that fame from their infancy, had grown up—it may have been the commonly adopted creed in Edinburgh, that Scott, however distinguished otherwise, was not to be named as a table-companion in the same day with this or that master of luminous dissertation or quick rejoinder, who now sleeps as forgotten as his grandmother. It was natural enough that persons brought up in the same circle with him, who remembered all his beginnings, and had but slowly learned to acquiesce in the justice of his claim to unrivalled honour in literature, should have clung all the closer for that late acquiescence to their original estimate of him as inferior to themselves in other titles to admiration. It was also natural that their prejudice on that score should be readily taken up by the young aspirants who breathed, as it were, the atmosphere of their professional renown. Perhaps, too, Scott's steady Toryism, and the effect of his genius and example in modifying the intellectual sway of the long dominant Whigs in the north, may have had some share in this matter. However all that may have been, the substance of what I had been accustomed to hear certainly was, that Scott had a marvellous stock of queer stories, which he often told with happy effect, but that, bating these drafts on a portentous memory, set off with a simple old-fashioned *naïveté* of humour and pleasantry, his strain of talk was remarkable neither for depth of remark nor felicity of illustration; that his views and opinions on the most important topics of practical interest were hopelessly perverted by his blind enthusiasm for the dreams of by-gone ages; and that, but for the grotesque phenomenon presented by a great writer of the 19th century gravely uttering sentiments worthy of his own Dundees and Invernahyles, the main texture of his discourse would be pronounced by any enlightened member of modern society rather bald and poor than otherwise. I think the epithet most in vogue was *commonplace.*

It will easily be believed, that, in companies such as I have been alluding to, made up of, or habitually domineered over by voluble Whigs and political economists, Scott was often tempted to put forth his Tory doctrines and antiquarian prejudices in an exaggerated shape—in colours, to say the truth, altogether different from what they assumed under other circumstances, or which had any real influence upon his mind and conduct on occasions of practical moment. But I fancy it will seem equally credible, that the most sharp-sighted of these social critics may not always have been capable of tracing, and doing justice to, the powers which Scott brought to bear upon the topics which they, not he, had chosen for discussion. In passing from a gas-lit hall into a room with wax candles, the guests sometimes complain that they have left splendour for gloom; but let them try by what sort of light it is most satisfactory to read, write, or embroider, or consider at leisure under which of the two either men or women look their best.

The strongest, purest, and least observed of all lights is, however, daylight; and his talk was commonplace, just as sunshine is, which gilds the most indifferent objects, and adds brilliancy to the brightest. As for the old-world anecdotes which these clever persons were condescending enough to laugh at as pleasant extravagances, serving merely to relieve and set off the main stream of debate, they were often enough, it may be guessed, connected with the theme in hand by links not the less apt that they might be too subtle to catch their bedazzled and self-satisfied optics. There might be keener knowledge of human nature than was "dreamt of in their philosophy"—which passed with them for *commonplace*, only because it was clothed in plain familiar household words, not dressed up in some pedantic masquerade of antithesis. "There are people," says Landor, "who think they write and speak finely, merely because they have forgotten the language in which their fathers and mothers used to talk to them;" and surely there are a thousand homely old proverbs, which many a dainty modern would think it beneath his dignity to quote either in speech or writing, any one of which condenses more wit (take that word in any of its senses) than could be extracted from all that was ever said or written by the *doctrinaires* of the Edinburgh school. Many of those gentlemen held Scott's conversation to be commonplace exactly for the same reason that a child thinks a perfectly limpid stream, though perhaps deep enough to drown it three times over, must needs be shallow. But it will be easily believed that the best and highest of their own idols had better means and skill of measurement: I can never forget the pregnant expression of one of the ablest of that school and party—Lord Cockburn—who, when some glib youth chanced to echo in his hearing the consolatory tenet of local mediocrity, answered quietly—"I have the misfortune to think differently from you—in my humble opinion Walter Scott's *sense* is a still more wonderful thing than his *genius*."

Indeed I have no sort of doubt that, long before 1818, full justice was done to Scott, even in these minor things, by all those of his Edinburgh acquaintance, whether Whig or Tory, on whose personal opinion he could have been supposed to set much value. With few exceptions, the really able lawyers of his own or nearly similar standing had ere that time attained stations of judicial dignity, or were in the springtide of practice; and in either case they were likely to consider general society much in his own fashion, as the joyous relaxation of life, rather than the theatre of exertion and display. Their tables were elegantly, some of them sumptuously spread; and they lived in a pretty constant interchange of entertainments upon a large scale, in every circumstance of which, conversation included, it was their ambition to imitate those voluptuous metropolitan circles, wherein most of them had from time to time mingled, and several of them with distinguished success. Among such prosperous gentlemen, like himself past the *mezzo cammin*, Scott's picturesque anecdotes, rich easy humour, and gay involuntary glances of mother-wit, were, it is not difficult to suppose, appreciated above contributions of a more ambitious stamp; and no doubt his London *reputation de salon* (which had by degrees risen to a high pitch, although he cared nothing for it) was not without its effect in Edinburgh. But still the old prejudice lingered on in the general opinion of the place, especially among the smart praters of *the Outer-House*, whose glimpses of the social habits of their superiors were likely to be rare, and their gall-bladders to be more distended than their purses.

In truth it was impossible to listen to Scott's oral narrations, whether gay or serious, or to the felicitous fun with which he parried absurdities of all sorts, without discovering better qualities in his talk than *wit*—and of a higher order; I mean especially a power of *vivid painting* —the true and primary sense of what is called *Imagination.* He was like Jacques—though not a "Melancholy Jacques;" and "moralized" a common topic "into a thousand similitudes." Shakspeare and the banished Duke would have found him "full of matter." He disliked mere disquisitions in Edinburgh, and prepared *impromptus* in London; and puzzled the promoters of such things sometimes by placid silence, sometimes by broad merriment. To such men he seemed *common-place*—not so to the most dexterous masters in what was to some of them almost a science; not so to Rose, Hallam, Moore, or Rogers,—to Ellis, Macintosh, Croker, or Canning.

Scott managed to give and receive such great dinners as I have been alluding to at least as often as any other private gentleman in Edinburgh; but he very rarely accompanied his wife and daughters to the evening assemblies, which commonly ensued under other roofs—for *early to rise*, unless in the case of spare-fed anchorites, takes for granted *early to bed.* When he had no dinner engagement, he frequently gave a few hours to the theatre; but still more frequently, when the weather was fine, and still more, I believe, to his own satisfaction, he drove out with some of his family, or a single friend, in an open carriage; the favourite rides being either to the Blackford Hills, or to Ravelston, and so home by Corstorphine; or to the beach of Portobello, where *Peter* was always instructed to keep his horses as near as possible to the sea. More than once, even in the first summer of my acquaintance with him, I had the pleasure of accompanying him on these evening excursions; and never did he seem to enjoy himself more fully than when placidly surveying at such sunset or moonlight hours, either the massive outlines of his "own romantic town," or the tranquil expanse of its noble estuary. He delighted, too, in passing when he could, through some of the quaint windings of the ancient city itself, now deserted, except at mid-day, by the upper world. How often have I seen him go a long way round about, rather than miss the opportunity of halting for a few minutes on the vacant esplanade of Holyrood, or under the darkest shadows of the Castle rock, where it overhangs the Grassmarket, and the huge slab that still marks where the gibbet of Porteous and the Covenanters had its station. His coachman knew him too well to move at a Jehu's pace amidst such scenes as these. No funeral hearse crept more leisurely than did his landau up the Canongate or the Cowgate; and not a queer tottering gable but recalled to him some long-buried memory of splendour or bloodshed, which, by a few words, he set before the hearer in the reality of life. His image is so associated in my mind with the antiquities of his native place, that I cannot now revisit them without feeling as if I were treading on his gravestone.

Whatever might happen on the other evenings of the week, he always dined at home on Sunday, and usually some few friends were then with him, but never any person with whom he stood on ceremony. These were, it may readily be supposed, the most agreeable of his entertainments. He came into the room rubbing his hands, his face bright and gleesome, like a boy arriving at home for the holydays, his Peppers and Mustards gambolling about his heels, and even the stately

Maida grinning and wagging his tail in sympathy. Among the most regular guests on these happy evenings were, in my time, as had long before been the case, Mrs Maclean Clephane of Torloisk, (with whom he agreed cordially on all subjects except the authenticity of Ossian), and her daughters, whose guardian he had become, at their own choice. The eldest of them had been for some years married to the Earl Compton (now Marquis of Northampton), and was of course seldom in the north; but the others had much of the same tastes and accomplishments which so highly distinguished the late Lady Northampton; and Scott delighted especially in their proficiency in the poetry and music of their native isles. Mr and Mrs Skene of Rubislaw were frequent attendants—and so were the Macdonald-Buchanans of Drumakiln, whose eldest daughter, Isabella, was his chief favourite among all his *nieces* of the Clerk's table—as was, among the *nephews*, my own dear friend and companion, Joseph Hume, a singularly graceful young man, rich in the promise of hereditary genius, but, alas! cut off in the early bloom of his days. The well-beloved Erskine was seldom absent; and very often Terry or James Ballantyne came with him—sometimes, though less frequently, Constable. Among other persons who now and then appeared at these "dinners without the silver dishes," as Scott called them, I may mention—to say nothing of such old cronies as Mr Clerk, Mr Thomson, and Mr Kirkpatrick Sharpe—Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, who had all his father *Bozzy's* cleverness, good humour, and joviality, without one touch of his meaner qualities,—wrote *Jenny dang the Weaver*, and some other popular songs, which he sang capitally—and was moreover a thorough bibliomaniac; the late Sir Alexander Don of Newton, in all courteous and elegant accomplishments the model of a cavalier; and last, not least, William Allan, R.A., who had shortly before this time returned to Scotland from several years of travel in Russia and Turkey. At one of these plain hearty dinners, however, the company rarely exceeded three or four, besides the as yet undivided family.

Scott had a story of a topping goldsmith on the Bridge who prided himself on being the mirror of Amphitryons, and accounted for his success by stating that it was his invariable custom to set his own stomach at ease, by a beef-steak and a pint of port in his back-shop, half an hour before the arrival of his guests. But the host of Castle Street had no occasion to imitate this prudent arrangement, for his appetite at dinner was neither keen nor nice. Breakfast was his chief meal. Before that came he had gone through the severest part of his day's work, and he then set to with the zeal of Crabbe's Squire Tovell—

> "And laid at once a pound upon his plate."

No foxhunter ever prepared himself for the field by more substantial appliances. His table was always provided, in addition to the usually plentiful delicacies of a Scotch breakfast, with some solid article, on which he did most lusty execution—a round of beef—a pasty, such as made Gil Blas's eyes water—or, most welcome of all, a cold sheep's head, the charms of which primitive dainty he has so gallantly defended against the disparaging sneers of Dr Johnson and his bear-leader.* A huge brown loaf flanked his elbow, and it was placed upon a broad wooden trencher, that he might cut and come again with the bolder knife. Often did the *Clerks' coach*, commonly called among themselves *the Lively*—which trundled round every morning to pick up the brotherhood, and then deposited them at the proper minute in the Parliament Close—often did this lumbering hackney arrive at his door before he had fully appeased what Homer calls "the sacred rage of hunger": and vociferous was the merriment of the learned *uncles*, when the surprised poet swung forth to join them, with an extemporized sandwich, that looked like a ploughman's luncheon, in his hand. But this robust supply would have served him in fact for the day. He never tasted any thing more before dinner, and at dinner he ate almost as sparingly as Squire Tovell's niece from the boarding-school—

---

* See Croker's Boswell (edit. 1831), vol. iii. p. 38.

——"Who cut the sanguine flesh in frustums fine,
And marvelled much to see the creatures dine."

The only dishes he was at all fond of were the old-fashioned ones, to which he had been accustomed in the days of Saunders Fairford; and which really are excellent dishes,—such, in truth, as Scotland borrowed from France before Catherine de Medicis brought in her Italian *virtuosi* to revolutionize the kitchen like the court. Of most of these, I believe, he has in the course of his novels found some opportunity to record his esteem. But, above all, who can forget that his King Jamie, amidst the splendours of Whitehall, thinks himself an ill-used monarch unless his first course includes *cockyleekie?*

It is a fact, which some philosophers may think worth setting down, that Scott's organization, as to more than one of the senses, was the reverse of exquisite. He had very little of what musicians call an ear; his smell was hardly more delicate. I have seen him stare about, quite unconscious of the cause, when his whole company betrayed their uneasiness at the approach of an over-kept haunch of venison; and neither by the nose nor the palate could he distinguish corked wine from sound.

He could never tell Madeira from Sherry—nay, an Oriental friend having sent him a butt of *sheeraz*, when he remembered the circumstance some time afterwards, and called for a bottle to have Sir John Malcolm's opinion of its quality, it turned out that his butler, mistaking the label, had already served up half the binn as *sherry*. Port he considered as physic: he never willingly swallowed more than one glass of it, and was sure to anathematize a second, if offered, by repeating John Home's epigram—

"Bold and erect the Caledonian stood,
Old was his mutton, and his claret good;
Let him drink port, the English statesman cried—
He drank the poison, and his spirit died."

In truth, he liked no wines except sparkling Champagne and claret; but even as to this last he was no connoisseur; and sincerely preferred a tumbler of whisky-toddy to the most precious "liquid ruby" that ever flowed in the cup of a prince. He rarely took any other potation when quite alone with his family; but at the Sunday board he circulated the Champagne briskly during dinner, and considered a pint of claret each man's fair share afterwards. I should not omit, however, that his Bourdeaux was uniformly preceded by a small libation of the genuine *mountain dew*, which he poured with his own hand, *more majorum*, for each guest—making use for the purpose of such a multifarious collection of ancient Highland *quaighs* (little cups of curiously dovetailed wood, inlaid with silver) as no Lowland sideboard but his was ever equipped with—but commonly reserving for himself one that was peculiarly precious in his eyes, as having travelled from Edinburgh to Derby in the canteen of Prince Charlie. This relic had been presented to "the wandering Ascanius" by some very careful follower, for its bottom is of glass, that he who quaffed might keep his eye the while upon the dirk hand of his companion.

The sound of music—(even, I suspect, of any sacred music but psalm-singing)—would be considered indecorous in the streets of Edinburgh on a Sunday night; so, upon the occasions I am speaking of, the harp was silent, and *Otterburne* and *The Bonny House of Airlie* must needs be dispensed with. To make amends, after tea in the drawing-room, Scott usually read some favourite author, for the amusement of his little circle; or Erskine, Ballantyne, or Terry did so, at his request. He himself read aloud high poetry with far greater simplicity, depth, and effect, than any other man I ever heard; and, in Macbeth or Julius Cæsar, or the like, I doubt if Kemble could have been more impressive. Yet the changes of intonation were so gently managed, that he contrived to set the different interlocutors clearly before us, without the least approach to theatrical artifice. Not so the others I have mentioned: they all read cleverly and agreeably, but with the decided trickery of stage recitation. To them he usually gave the book when it was a comedy, or, indeed, any other drama than Shakspeare's or Joanna Baillie's. Dryden's Fables, Johnson's two Satires, and certain detached scenes of Beaumont and Fletcher, especially that in the *Lover's Progress*, where the ghost of the musical innkeeper makes his appearance, were frequently selected. Of the poets, his contemporaries, however, there was not one that did not come in for his part. In Wordsworth, his pet pieces were, I think, the *Song for Brougham Castle*, the *Laodamia*, and some of the early sonnets:—in Southey, *Queen Orraca*, *Fernando Ramirez*, the *Lines on the Holly Tree*—and, of his larger poems, the *Thalaba*. Crabbe was perhaps, next to Shakspeare, the standing resource; but in those days Byron was pouring out his spirit fresh and full; and, if a new piece from his hand had appeared, it was sure to be read by Scott the Sunday evening afterwards, and that with such delighted emphasis, as showed how completely the elder bard had kept all his enthusiasm for poetry at the pitch of youth, all his admiration of genius free, pure, and unstained by the least drop of literary jealousy. Rare and beautiful example of a happily constituted and virtuously disciplined mind and character!

Very often something read aloud by himself or his friends suggested an old story of greater compass than would have suited a dinner-table—and he told it, whether serious or comical, or, as more frequently happened, part of both, exactly in every respect in the tone and style of the notes and illustrations to his novels. A great number of his best oral narratives have, indeed, been preserved in those parting lucubrations; and not a few in his letters. Yet very many there were of which his pen has left no record—so many, that, were I to task my memory, I could, I believe, recall the outlines at least of more than would be sufficient to occupy a couple of these volumes. Possibly, though well aware how little justice I could do to such things, rather than think of their perishing for ever, and leaving not even a shadow behind, I may at some future day hazard the attempt.

Let me turn, meanwhile, to some dinner-tables very different from his own, at which, from this time forward, I often met Scott. It is very true of the societies I am about to describe, that he was "among them, not of them;" and it is also most true that this fact was apparent in all the demeanour of his bibliopolical and typographical allies towards him whenever he visited them under their roofs—not a bit less so than when they were received at his own board; but still, considering how closely his most important wordly affairs were connected with the personal character of the Ballantynes, I think it a part, though neither a proud nor a very pleasing part, of my duty as his biographer, to record my reminiscences of them and their doings in some detail.

James Ballantyne then lived in St John Street, a row of good, old-fashioned, and spacious houses, adjoining the Canongate and Holyrood, and at no great distance from his printing establishment. He had married a few years before the daughter of a wealthy farmer in Berwickshire—a quiet, amiable woman, of simple manners, and perfectly domestic habits: a group of fine young children were growing up about him; and he usually, if not constantly, had under his roof his aged mother, his and his wife's tender care of whom it was most pleasing to witness. As far as a stranger might judge, there could not be a more exemplary household, or a happier one; and I have occasionally met the poet in St John Street when there were no other guests but Erskine, Terry, George Hogarth,* and another intimate friend or two, and when James Ballantyne was content to appear in his own true and best colours, the kind head of his family, the respectful but honest school-fellow of Scott, the easy landlord of a plain, comfortable table. But when any great event was about to take place in the business, especially on the eve of a new novel, there were doings of a higher strain in St John Street; and to be present at one of those scenes was truly a rich treat, even—if not especially—for persons who, like myself, had no more *knowledge* than the rest of the world as to the authorship of Waverley. Then were congregated about the printer all his own literary allies, of whom a considerable number were by no means personally familiar with "THE GREAT UNKNOWN:"—who, by the way, owed to him that widely adopted title;—and He appeared among the rest with his usual open aspect of buoyant good-humour—although it was not difficult to trace, in the occasional play of his features, the diversion it afforded him to watch all the procedure of his swelling confidant, and the curious neophytes that surrounded the well-spread board.

---

* George Hogarth, Esq., W.S., brother of Mrs James Ballantyne. This gentleman is now well known in the literary world; especially by a History of Music, of which all who understand that science speak highly.

The feast was, to use one of James's own favourite epithets, *gorgeous*; an aldermanic display of turtle and venison, with the suitable accompaniments of iced punch, potent ale, and generous Madeira. When the cloth was drawn the burley preses arose, with all he could muster of the port of John Kemble, and spouted with a sonorous voice the formula of Macbeth—

> "Fill full!
> I drink to the general joy of the whole table!"

This was followed by "the King, God bless him!" and second came—"Gentlemen, there is another toast which never has been nor shall be omitted in this house of mine—I give you the health of Mr Walter Scott, with three times three!"—All honour having been done to this health, and Scott having briefly thanked the company with some expressions of warm affection to their host, Mrs Ballantyne retired;—the bottles passed round twice or thrice in the usual way;—and then James rose once more, every vein on his brow distended, his eyes solemnly fixed upon vacancy, to propose, not as before in his stentorian key, but with "'bated breath," in the sort of whisper by which a stage conspirator thrills the gallery—"*Gentlemen, a bumper to the immortal Au-*

thor of Waverley!"—The uproar of cheering, in which Scott made a fashion of joining, was succeeded by deep silence, and then Ballantyne proceeded—

> "In his Lord-Burleigh-look, serene and serious,
> A something of imposing and mysterious"—

to lament the obscurity in which his illustrious but too modest correspondent still chose to conceal himself from the plaudits of the world—to thank the company for the manner in which the *nominis umbra* had been received—and to assure them that the Author of Waverley would, when informed of the circumstance, feel highly delighted—"the proudest hour of his life," &c. &c. The cool, demure fun of Scott's features during all this mummery was perfect; and Erskine's attempt at a gay *non-chalance* was still more ludicrously meritorious. Aldiborontiphoscophornio, however, bursting as he was, knew too well to allow the new novel to be made the subject of discussion. Its name was announced, and success to it crowned another cup; but after that no more of Jedediah. To cut the thread, he rolled out unbidden some one of his many theatrical songs, in a style that would have done no dishonour to almost any orchestra—*The Maid of Lodi*, or, perhaps, *the Bay of Biscay, oh!*—or *The sweet little cherub that sits up aloft*. Other toasts followed, interspersed with ditties from other performers; old George Thomson, the friend of Burns, was ready for one with *The Moorland Wedding*, or *Wilkie brew'd a peck o' maut*;—and so it went on, until Scott and Erskine, with any clerical or very staid personage that had chanced to be admitted, saw fit to withdraw. Then the scene was changed. The claret and olives made way for broiled bones and a mighty bowl of punch; and when a few glasses of the hot beverage had restored his powers, James opened *ore rotundo* on the merits of the forthcoming romance. "One chapter—one chapter only"—was the cry. After "*nay, by'r Lady, nay!*" and a few more coy shifts, the proof-sheets were at length produced, and James, with many a prefatory hem, read aloud what he considered as the most striking dialogue they contained.

The first I heard so read was the interview between Jeanie Deans, the Duke of Argyle, and Queen Caroline, in Richmond Park; and notwithstanding some spice of the pompous tricks to which he was addicted, I must say he did the inimitable scene great justice. At all events, the effect it produced was deep and memorable, and no wonder that the exulting typographer's *one bumper more to Jedediah Cleishbotham* preceded his parting-stave, which was uniformly *The Last Words of Marmion*, executed certainly with no contemptible rivalry of Braham.

What a different affair was a dinner, although probably including many of the same guests, at the junior partner's. He in those days retained, I think, no private apartments attached to his auction-rooms in Hanover Street, over the door of which he still kept emblazoned "John Ballantyne and Company, Booksellers." At any rate, such of his entertainments as I ever saw Scott partake of, were given at his villa near to the Frith of Forth, by Trinity: a retreat which the little man had named "Harmony Hall," and invested with an air of dainty voluptuous finery, contrasting strikingly enough with the substantial citizen-like snugness of his elder brother's domestic appointments. His house was surrounded by gardens so contrived as to seem of considerable extent, having many a shady tuft, trellised alley, and mysterious alcove, interspersed among their bright parterres. It was a fairy-like labyrinth, and there was no want of pretty Armidas, such as they might be, to glide half-seen among its mazes. The sitting-rooms opened upon gay and perfumed conservatories, and John's professional excursions to Paris and Brussels in quest of objects of *virtu*, had supplied both the temptation and the means to set forth the interior in a fashion that might have satisfied the most fastidious *petite maitresse* of Norwood or St Denis. John too was a married man: he had, however, erected for himself a private wing, the accesses to which, whether from the main building or the bosquet, were so narrow that it was physically impossible for the handsome and portly lady who bore his name to force her person through any one of them. His dinners were in all respects Parisian, for his wasted palate disdained such John Bull luxuries as were all in all with James. The piquant pasty of Strasburg or Perigord was never to seek; and even the *pièce de résistance* was probably a boar's head from Coblentz, or a turkey ready stuffed with truffles from the Palais Royal. The pictures scattered among John's innumerable mirrors, were chiefly of theatrical subjects —many of them portraits of beautiful actresses—the same Peg Woffingtons, Bellamys, Kitty Clives, and so forth, that found their way in the sequel to Charles Matthews's gallery at Highgate. Here that exquisite comedian's own mimicries and parodies were the life and soul of many a festival, and here, too, he gathered from his facetious host not a few of the richest materials for his *at homes* and *monopolylogues*. But, indeed, whatever actor or singer of eminence visited Edinburgh, of the evenings when he did not perform several were sure to be reserved for Trinity. Here Braham quavered, and here Liston drolled his best—here Johnstone, and Murray, and Yates, mixed jest and stave—here Kean revelled and rioted—and here the Roman Kemble often played the Greek from sunset to dawn. Nor did the popular *cantatrice* or *danseuse* of the time disdain to freshen her roses, after a laborious week, amidst these Paphian arbours of Harmony Hall.

Johnny had other tastes that were equally expensive. He had a well-furnished stable, and followed the fox-hounds whenever the cover was within an easy distance. His horses were all called after heroes in Scott's poems or novels; and at this time he usually rode up to his auction on a tall milk-white hunter, yclept *Old Mortality*, attended by a leash or two of greyhounds,—Die Vernon, Jenny Dennison, and so forth, by name. The featherweight himself appeared uniformly, hammer-in-hand, in the half-dress of some sporting club—a light grey frock, with emblems of the chase on its silver buttons, white cord breeches, and jockey-boots in Meltonian order. Yet he affected in the pulpit rather a grave address; and was really one of the most plausible and imposing of the Puff tribe. Probably Scott's presence overawed his ludicrous propensities; for the poet was, when sales were going on, almost a daily attendant in Hanover Street, and himself not the least energetic of the numerous competitors for Johnny's uncut *fifteeners*, Venetian lamps, Milanese cuirasses, and old Dutch cabinets. Maida, by the way, was so well aware of his master's habits, that about the time when the Court of Session was likely to break up for the day, he might usually be seen couched in expectation among Johnny's own *tail* of greyhounds at the threshold of the mart.

It was at one of those Trinity dinners this summer, that I first saw Constable. Being struck with his appearance, I asked Scott who he was, and he told me—expressing some surprise that any body should have lived a winter or two in Edinburgh without knowing, by sight at least, a citizen whose name was so familiar to the world. I happened to say that I had not been prepared to find the great bookseller a man of such gentlemanlike and even distinguished bearing. Scott smiled and answered—" Ay, Constable is indeed a grandlooking chield. He puts me in mind of Fielding's apology for Lady Booby—to wit, that Joseph Andrews had an air which, to those who had not seen many noblemen, would give an idea of nobility." I had not in those days been much initiated in the private jokes of what is called, by way of excellence, *the trade*, and was puzzled when Scott, in the course of the dinner, said to Constable, " Will your Czarish Majesty do me the honour to take a glass of Champagne ?" I asked the master of the feast for an explanation. " Oh !" said he, " are you so green as not to know that Constable long since dubbed himself *The Czar of Muscovy*, John Murray *The Emperor of the West*, and Longman and his string of partners *The Divan?*"—" And what title," I asked, " has Mr John Ballantyne himself found in this new *almanac imperial?*"—" Let that flee stick to the wa'," quoth Johnny ; " When I set up for a bookseller, The Crafty christened me *The Dey of Alljeers*—but he now considers me as next thing to dethroned." He added—" His majesty the autocrat is too fond of these nicknames. One day a partner of the house of Longman was dining with him in the country, to settle an important piece of business, about which there occurred a good deal of difficulty. ' What fine swans you have in your pond there,' said the Londoner, by way of parenthesis.—' Swans !' cried Constable—' they are only geese, man. There are just five of them, if you please to observe, and their names are Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.' This skit cost The Crafty a good bargain."

It always appeared to me that James Ballantyne felt his genius rebuked in the presence of Constable ; his manner was constrained, his smile servile, his hilarity elaborate. Not so with Johnny: the little fellow never seemed more airily frolicsome than when he capered for the amusement of the Czar.* I never, however, saw those two together, where I am told the humours of them both were exhibited to the richest advantage—I mean at the Sunday dinners with which Constable regaled, among others, his own circle of literary serfs, and when "Jocund Johnny" was very commonly his croupier. There are stories enough of practical jokes upon such occasions, some of them near akin to those which the author of Humphrey Clinker has thought fit to record of his own suburban villa, in the most diverting of young Melford's letters to Sir Watkin Philips. I have heard, for example, a luculent description of poor *Elshender Campbell*, and another drudge of the same class, running a race after dinner for a new pair of breeches, which Mr David Bridges, tailor in ordinary to this northern potentate—himself a wit, a virtuoso, and the croupier on that day in lieu of Rigdum—had been instructed to bring with him, and display before the threadbare rivals. But I had these pictures from John Ballantyne, and I daresay they might be overcharged. That Constable was a most bountiful and generous patron to the ragged tenants of Grub Street there can, however, be no doubt; and as little that John himself acted on all occasions by them in the same spirit, and this to an extent greatly beyond what prudence (if he had ever consulted that guide in any thing) would have dictated.

---

* "Now, John," cried Constable one evening after he had told one of his best stories—"Now, John, is that true?"—His object evidently was, in Iago's phrase, *to let down the pegs;* but Rigdum answered gaily, "True, indeed? Not one word of it!—any blockhead may stick to truth, my hearty—but 'tis a sad hamperer of genius."

When I visited Constable, as I often did at a period somewhat later than that of which I now speak, and for the most part in company with Scott, I found the bookseller established in a respectable country gentleman's seat, some six or seven miles out of Edinburgh, and doing the honours of it with all the ease that might have been looked for had he been the long-descended owner of the place. There was no foppery, no show, no idle luxury, but to all appearance the plain abundance and simple enjoyment of hereditary wealth. His conversation was manly and vigorous, abounding in Scotch anecdotes of the old time, which he told with a degree of spirit and humour only second to his great author's. No man could more effectually control, when he had a mind, either the extravagant vanity which, on too many occasions, made him ridiculous, or the despotic temper, which habitually held in fear and trembling all such as were in any sort dependent on his Czarish Majesty's pleasure. In him I never saw (at this period) any thing but the unobtrusive sense and the calm courtesy of a well-bred gentleman. His very equipage kept up the series of contrasts between him and the two Ballantynes. Constable went back and forward between the town and Polton in a deep-hung and capacious green barouche, without any pretence at heraldic blazonry, drawn by a pair of sleek, black, long-tailed horses, and conducted by a grave old coachman in plain blue livery. The Printer of the Canongate drove himself and his wife about the streets and suburbs in a snug machine, which did not overburthen one powerful and steady cob; while the gay auctioneer, whenever he left the saddle for the box, mounted a bright blue dog-cart, and rattled down the Newhaven road with two high-mettled steeds, prancing *tandem* before him, and most probably—especially if he was on his way to the races at Musselburgh—with some "sweet singer of Israel" flaming, with all her feathers, beside him. On such occasions, by the by, Johnny sometimes had a French horn with him, and he played on it with good skill, and with an energy by no means prudent in the state of his lungs.

The Sheriff told with peculiar unction the following anecdote of this spark. The first time he went over to pick up curiosities at Paris, it happened that he met, in the course of his traffickings, a certain brother bookseller of Edinburgh, as unlike him as one man could well be to another—a grave, dry Presbyterian, rigid in all his notions as the buckle of his wig. This precise worthy having ascertained John's address, went to call on him, a day or two afterwards, with the news of some richly illuminated missal, which he might possibly be glad to make prize of. On asking for his friend, a smiling *laquais de place* informed him that *Monsieur* had gone out, but that *Madame* was at home. Not doubting that Mrs Ballantyne had accompanied her husband on his trip, he desired to pay his respects to *Madame*, and was ushered in accordingly. "But oh, Mr Scott!" said, or rather groaned the austere elder, on his return from this modern Babylon—"oh, Mr Scott, there was nae Mrs John yonder, but a painted Jezabel sittin' up in her bed, wi' a wheen impudent French limmers like hersel', and twa or three whiskered blackguards, takin' their collation o' nicknacks and champagne wine! I ran out o' the house as if I had been shot. What judgment will this wicked warld come to! The Lord pity us!" Scott was a severe enough censor in the general of such levities, but somehow, in the case of Rigdumfunnidos, he seemed to regard them with much the same toleration as the naughty tricks of a monkey in the "Jardin des Plantes."

Why did Scott persist in mixing up all his most important concerns with such people as I have been describing? I asked himself that question too unceremoniously at a long subsequent period, and in due time the reader shall see the answer I received. But it left the main question, to my apprehension, as much in the dark as ever. I shall return to the sad subject hereafter more seriously; but in the meantime let it suffice to say, that he was the most patient, long-suffering, affectionate, and charitable of mankind; that in the case of both the Ballantynes he could count, after all, on a sincerely, nay, a passionately devoted attachment to his person; that, with the greatest of human beings, use is in all but unconquerable power; and that he who so loftily tossed aside the seemingly most dangerous assaults of flattery, the blandishment of dames, the condescension of princes, the enthusiasm of crowds—had still his weak point upon which two or three humble besiegers, and one unwearied, though most frivolous underminer, well knew how to direct their approaches. It was a favourite saw of his own, that the wisest of our race often reserve the average stock of folly to be all expended upon some one flagrant absurdity.

CHAPTER VI.

PUBLICATION OF THE HEART OF MID-LOTHIAN—ITS RECEPTION IN EDINBURGH AND IN ENGLAND—ABBOTSFORD IN OCTOBER—MELROSE ABBEY—DRYBURGH, ETC.—LION-HUNTERS FROM AMERICA—TRAGEDY OF THE CHEROKEE LOVERS—SCOTT'S DINNER TO THE SELKIRKSHIRE YEOMEN.

1818.

Hoping to be forgiven for a long digression, the biographer willingly returns to the thread of Scott's story. The Heart of Mid-Lothian appeared, as has been mentioned, before the close of June 1818; and among the letters which he received soon afterwards from the friends by this time in the secret, there is one which (though I do not venture to name the writer) I am tempted to take the liberty of quoting :—

" . . . . . . Now for it . . . . I can speak to the purpose, as I have not only read it myself, but am in a house where every body is tearing it out of each other's hands, and talking of nothing else. So much for its success—the more flattering, because it overcomes a prejudice. People were beginning to say the author would wear himself out; it was going on too long in the same key, and no striking notes could possibly be produced. On the contrary, I think the interest is stronger here than in any of the former ones—(always excepting my first-love Waverley)—and one may congratulate you upon having effected what many have tried to do, and nobody yet succeeded in, making the perfectly good character the most interesting. Of late days, especially since it has been the fashion to write moral and even religious novels, one might almost say of some of the wise good heroines, what a lively girl once said to ***** of her well-meaning aunt—'Upon my word she is enough to make any body wicked.' And though beauty and talents are heaped on the right side, the writer, in spite of himself, is sure to put agreeableness on the wrong; the person, from whose errors he means you should take warning, runs away with your secret partiality in the mean time. Had this very story been conducted by a common hand, Effie would have attracted all our concern and sympathy, Jeanie only cold approbation. Whereas Jeanie, without youth, beauty, genius, warm passions, or any other novel-perfection, is here our object from beginning to end. This is 'enlisting the affections in the cause of virtue' ten times more than ever Richardson did; for whose male and female pedants, all-excelling as they are, I never could care half so much as I found myself inclined to do for Jeanie before I finished the first volume.

"You know I tell you my opinion just as I should do to a third person, and I trust the freedom is not unwelcome. I was a little tired of your Edinburgh lawyers in the introduction; English people in general will be more so, as well as impatient of the passages alluding to Scotch law throughout. Mr Saddletree will not entertain them. The latter part of the fourth volume unavoidably flags to a certain degree; after Jeanie is happily settled at Roseneath, we have no more to wish for. But the chief fault I have to find relates to the reappearance and shocking fate of the boy. I hear on all sides—'Oh I do not like that!'—I cannot say what I would have had instead; but I do not like it either; it is a lame, huddled conclusion. I know you so well in it by the by!—you grow tired yourself, want to get rid of the story, and hardly care how. Sir George Staunton finishes his career very fitly; he ought not to die in his bed, and for Jeanie's sake one would not have him hanged. It is unnatural, though, that he should ever have gone within twenty miles of the tolbooth, or shown his face in the streets of Edinburgh, or dined at a public meeting, if the Lord Commissioner had been his brother. Here ends my *per contra* account. The opposite page would make my letter too long, if I entered equally into particulars. Carlisle and Corby-castles in Waverley did not affect me more deeply than the prison and trial scenes. The end of poor Madge Wildfire is also most pathetic. The meeting at Muschat's cairn tremendous. Dumbiedykes and Rory Bean are delightful. And I shall own that my prejudices were secretly gratified by the light in which you place John of Argyle, whom Mr Coxe so ran down to please Lord Orford. You have drawn him to the very life. I heard so much of him in my youth, so many anecdotes, so often 'as the Duke of Argyle used to say'—that I really believe I am almost as good a judge as if I had seen and lived with him. The late Lady ****** told me, that when she married, he was still remarkably handsome; with manners more graceful and engaging than she ever saw in any one else; the most agreeable person in conversation, the best teller of a story. When fifty-seven thus captives eighteen, the natural powers of pleasing must be extraordinary. You have likewise coloured Queen Caroline exactly right—but I was bred up in another creed about Lady Suffolk, of whom, as a very old deaf woman, I have some faint recollection. Lady ****** knew her intimately, and never would allow she had been the King's mistress, though she owned it was currently believed. She said he had just enough liking for her to make the Queen very civil to her, and very jealous and spiteful; the rest remained always uncertain at most, like a similar scandal in our days, where I, for one, imagine love of seeming influence on one side, and love of lounging, of an easy house and a good dinner on the other, to be all the criminal passions concerned. However, I confess, Lady ****** had that in herself which made her not ready to think the worst of her fellow-women.

"Did you ever hear the history of John Duke of Argyle's marriage, and constant attachment, before and after, to a woman not handsomer or much more elegant than Jeanie Deans, though very unlike her in understanding? I can give it you, if you wish it, for it is at my finger's ends. Now I am ancient myself, I should be a great treasure of anecdote to any body who had the same humour,—but I meet with few who have. They read vulgar tales in books, Wraxall, and so forth, what the footmen and maids only gave credit to at the moment, but they desire no farther information. I dare swear many of your readers never heard of the Duke of Argyle before. 'Pray, who was Sir Robert Walpole,' they ask me, 'and when did he live?'—or perhaps—'Was not the great Lord Chatham in Queen Anne's days?'

"We have, to help us, an exemplification on two legs in our country apothecary, whom you have painted over and over without the honour of knowing him; an old, dry, arguing, prosing, obstinate Scotchman, very shrewd, rather sarcastic, a sturdy Whig and Presbyterian, *tirant un peu sur le democrat*. Your books are birdlime to him, however; he hovers about the house to obtain a volume when others have done with it. I long to ask him whether douce Davie was any way sib to him. He acknowledges he would not *now* go to

Muschat's Cairn at night for any money—he had such a horror of it 'sixty years ago' when a laddie. But I am come to the end of my fourth page, and will not tire you with any more scribbling." . . . . . .

"P. S.—If I had known nothing, and the whole world had told me the contrary, I should have found you out in that one parenthesis,—'for the man was mortal, and had been a schoolmaster.'"

This letter was addressed from a great country house in the south; and may, I presume, be accepted as a fair index of the instantaneous English popularity of Jeanie Deans. From the choice of localities, and the splendid blazoning of tragical circumstances that had left the strongest impression on the memory and imagination of every inhabitant, the reception of this tale in Edinburgh was a scene of all-engrossing enthusiasm, such as I never witnessed there on the appearance of any other literary novelty. But the admiration and delight were the same all over Scotland. Never before had he seized such really noble features of the national character as were canonized in the person of his homely heroine: no art had ever devised a happier running contrast than that of her and her sister—or interwoven a portraiture of lowly manners and simple virtues, with more graceful delineations of polished life, or with bolder shadows of terror, guilt, crime, remorse, madness, and all the agony of the passions.

In the introduction and notes to the Heart of Mid-Lothian, drawn up in 1830, we are presented with details concerning the suggestion of the main plot, and the chief historical incidents made use of, to which I can add nothing of any moment.

The 12th of July restored the author as usual to the supervision of his trees and carpenters; but he had already told the Ballantynes, that the story which he had found it impossible to include in the recent series of Jedediah should be forthwith taken up as the opening one of a third; and instructed John to embrace the first favourable opportunity of offering Constable the publication of this, on the footing of 10,000 copies again forming the first edition; but now at length without any more stipulations connected with the unfortunate "old stock" of the Hanover Street Company.

Before he settled himself to his work, however, he made a little tour of the favourite description with his wife and children—halting for a few days at Drumlanrig, thence crossing the Border to Carlisle and Rokeby, and returning by way of Alnwick. On the 17th August, he writes thus to John Ballantyne from Drumlanrig:—"This is heavenly weather, and I am making the most of it, as I shall have a laborious autumn before me. I may say of my head and fingers as the farmer of his mare, when he indulged her with an extra feed—

'Ye ken that Maggie winna sleep
For that or Simmer.'

We have taken our own horses with us, and I have my poney, and ride when I find it convenient."

The following seems to have been among the first letters he wrote after his return.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Rokeby.

"Abbotsford, 10th Sept. 1818.

"My dear Morritt,

"We have been cruising to and fro since we left your land of woods and streams. Lord Melville wished me to come and stay two days with him at Melville Castle, which has broken in upon my time a little, and interrupted my purpose of telling you as how we arrived safe at Abbotsford, without a drop of rain, thus completing a tour of three weeks in the same fine weather in which we commenced it—a thing which never fell to my lot before. Captain Ferguson is inducted into the office of Keeper of the Regalia, to the great joy, I think, of all Edinburgh. He has entered upon a farm (of eleven acres) in consequence of this advancement, for you know it is a general rule, that whenever a Scotsman gets his head *above water*, he immediately turns it *to land*. As he has already taken all the advice of all the *notables* in and about the good village of Darnick, we expect to see his farm look like a tailor's book of patterns, a snip of every several opinion which he has received occupying its appropriate corner. He is truly what the French call *un drole de corps*.

"I wish you would allow your coachman to look out for me among your neighbours a couple of young colts (rising three would be the best age) that would match for a carriage some two years hence. I have plenty of grass for them in the mean while, and should never know the expense of their keep at Abbotsford. He seemed to think he could pick them up at from L.25 to L.30, which would make an immense saving hereafter. Peter Matheson and he had arranged some sort of plan of this kind. For a pair of very ordinary carriage-horses in Edinburgh they ask L.140 or more; so it is worth while to be a little provident. Even then you only get one good horse, the other being usually a brute. Pray you excuse all this palaver—

> 'These little things are great to little men.'

Our harvest is almost all in, but as farmers always grumble about something, they are now growling about the lightness of the crop. All the young part of our household are wrapt up in uncertainty concerning the Queen's illness—for—if her Majesty parts cable, there will be no Forest Ball, and that is a terrible prospect. On Wednesday (when no post arrives from London) Lord Melville chanced to receive a letter with a black seal by express, and as it was of course argued to contain the expected intelligence of poor Charlotte, it sold a good many ells of black cloth and stuffs before it was ascertained to contain no such information. Surely this came within the line of high treason, being an imagining of the Queen's death. Ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—Once more *anent* the colts. I am indifferent about colour; but, *cæteris paribus*, would prefer black or brown to bright bay or grey. I mention two off—as the age at which they can be best judged of by the buyer."

Of the same date I find written in pencil, on what must have been the envelope of some sheriff's-process, this note, addressed to Mr Charles Erskine, the sheriff-substitute of Selkirkshire:—

"September 10, 1818.

"Dear Charles,

"I have read these papers with all attention this morning—but think you will agree with me that there must be an Eke to the Condescendence. Order the Eke against next day. Tom leaves with this packet a blackcock, and (more's the pity) a grey hen. Yours,

W. S."

And again he thus writes by post to James Ballantyne:—

"Abbotsford, September 10, 1818.

"Dear James,

"I am quite satisfied with what has been done as to the London bills. I am glad the presses move. I have been interrupted sadly since my return by tourist gazers—this day a confounded pair of Cambridge boys have robbed me of two good hours, and you of a sheet of copy—though whether a good sheet or no, deponent saith not. The story is a dismal one, and I doubt sometimes whether it will bear working out to much length after all. Query, if I shall make it so effective in two volumes as my mother does in her quarter of an hour's crack by the fireside. But *nil desperandum.* You shall have a bunch to-morrow or next day—and when the proofs come in, my pen must and shall step out. By the by, I want a supply of pens—and ditto of ink. Adieu for the present, for I must go over to Toftfield, to give orders *anent* the dam and the footpath, and see *item* as to what should be done *anent* steps at the Rhymer's Waterfall, which I think may be made to turn out a decent bit of a linn, as would set True Thomas his worth and dignity. Ever yours,

W. S."

It must, I think, be allowed that these careless scraps, when combined, give a curious picture of the man who was brooding over the first chapters of the Bride of Lammermoor. One of his visitors of that month was Mr R. Cadell, who was of course in all the secrets of the house of Constable; and observing how his host was harassed with lion-hunters, and what a number of hours he spent daily in the company of his work-people, he expressed, during one of their walks, his wonder that Scott should ever be able to write books at all while in the country. "I know," he said, "that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere pen-work; but when is it that you think?" "O," said Scott, "I lie *simmering* over things for an hour or so before I get up—and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping half-waking *projet de chapitre*—and when I get the paper before me, it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a dose in the plantations, and, while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world."

It was in the month following that I first saw Abbotsford. He invited my friend John Wilson (now Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh) and myself to visit him for a day or two on our return from an excursion to Mr Wilson's beautiful villa on the Lake of Windermere, but named the particular day (October 8th) on which it would be most convenient for him to receive us; and we discovered on our arrival, that he had fixed it from a good-natured motive. We found him walking in one of his plantations, at no great distance from the house, with five or six young people, and his friends Lord Melville and Captain Ferguson. Having presented us to the First Lord of the Admiralty, he fell back a little and said, "I am glad you came to-day, for I thought it might be of use to you both, some time or other, to be known to my old schoolfellow here, who is, and I hope will long continue to be, the great giver of good things in the Parliament House. I trust you have had enough of certain pranks with your friend Ebony, and if so, Lord Melville will have too much sense to remember them."* We then walked round the plantation, as yet in a very young state, and came back to the house by a formidable work which he was constructing for the defence of his *haugh* against the wintry violences of the Tweed; and he discoursed for some time with keen interest upon the comparative merits of different methods of embankment, but stopped now and then to give us the advantage of any point of view in which his new building on the eminence above pleased his eye. It had a fantastic appearance—being but a fragment of the existing edifice—and not at all harmonizing in its outline with "Mother Retford's" original tenement to the eastward. Scott, however, expatiated *con amore* on the rapidity with which, being chiefly of darkish granite, it was assuming a "time-honoured" aspect. Ferguson, with a grave and respectful look, observed, "yes, it really has much the air of some old fastness hard by the river Jordan." This allusion to the Chaldee MS., already quoted, in the manufacture of which Ferguson fancied Wilson and myself to have had a share, gave rise to a burst of laughter among Scott's merry young folks and their companions, while he himself drew in his nether lip, and rebuked the Captain with "Toots, Adam! toots, Adam!" He then returned to his embankment, and described how a former one had been entirely swept away in one night's flood. But the Captain was ready with another verse of the Chaldee MS., and groaned out, by way of echo—"Verily my fine gold hath perished!" Whereupon the "Great Magician" elevated his huge oaken staff as if to lay it on the waggish soldier's back—but flourished it gaily over his own head, and laughed louder than the

---

* *Ebony* was Mr Blackwood's own usual designation in the *jeux d esprit* of his young Magazine, in many of which the persons thus

---

addressed by Scott were conjoint culprits. They both were then, as may be inferred, sweeping the boards of the Parliament House as "briefless barristers."

youngest of the company. As we walked and talked, the Pepper and Mustard terriers kept snuffing about among the bushes and heather near us, and started every five minutes a hare, which scudded away before them and the ponderous staghound Maida—the Sheriff and all his tail hollowing and cheering in perfect confidence that the dogs could do no more harm to poor puss than the venerable tom-cat, Hinse of Hinsfeldt, who pursued the vain chase with the rest.

At length we drew near *Peterhouse*, and found sober Peter himself and his brother-in-law, the facetious factotum Tom Purdie, superintending, pipe in mouth, three or four sturdy labourers busy in laying down the turf for a bowling-green. "I have planted hollies all round it, you see," said Scott, "and laid out an arbour on the right-hand side for the laird; and here I mean to have a game at bowls after dinner every day in fine weather—for I take that to have been among the indispensables of our old *vie de chateau*." But I must not forget the reason he gave me some time afterwards for having fixed on that spot for his bowling-green. "In truth," he then said, "I wished to have a smooth walk and a canny seat for myself within ear-shot of Peter's evening psalm." The coachman was a devout Presbyterian, and many a time have I in after-years accompanied Scott on his evening stroll, when the principal object was to enjoy, from the bowling-green, the unfailing melody of this good man's family worship—and heard him repeat, as Peter's manly voice led the humble choir within, that beautiful stanza of Burns's Saturday Night:—

> "They chaunt their artless notes in simple guise;
> They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim," &c.

It was near the dinner-hour before we reached the house, and presently I saw assembled a larger company than I should have fancied to be at all compatible with the existing accommodations of the place; but it turned out that Captain Ferguson, and the friends whom I have not as yet mentioned, were to find quarters elsewhere for the night. His younger brother, Captain John Ferguson of the Royal Navy (a favourite lieutenant of Lord Nelson's), had come over from Huntly Burn; there were present also, Mr Scott of Gala, whose residence is within an easy distance; Sir Henry Hay MacDougal of Mackerstone, an old baronet with gay, lively, and highly polished manners, related in the same degree to both Gala and the Sheriff; Sir Alexander Don, the member for Roxburghshire, whose elegant social qualities have been alluded to in the preceding chapter; and Dr Scott of Darnlee, a modest and intelligent gentleman, who having realized a fortune in the East India Company's medical service, had settled within two or three miles of Abbotsford, and though no longer practising his profession, had kindly employed all the resources of his skill in the endeavour to counteract his neighbour's recent liability to attacks of cramp.—Our host and one or two others appeared, as was in those days a common fashion with country gentlemen, in the lieutenancy uniform of their county. How fourteen or fifteen people contrived to be seated in the then dining-room of Abbotsford I know not—for it seemed quite full enough when it contained only eight or ten; but so it was—nor, as Sir Harry Macdougal's fat valet, warned by former experience, did not join the train of attendants, was there any perceptible difficulty in the detail of the arrangements. Every thing about the dinner was, as the phrase runs, in excellent style; and in particular, the *potage à la Meg Merrilees*, announced as an attempt to imitate a device of the Duke of Buccleuch's celebrated cook—by name Monsieur Florence—seemed, to those at least who were better acquainted with the Kaim of Derncleuch than with the *cuisine* of Bowhill,* a very laudable specimen of the art. The champagne circulated nimbly—and I never was present at a gayer dinner. It had advanced a little beyond the soup when it received an accompaniment which would not, perhaps, have improved the satisfaction of Southern guests, had any such been present. A tall and stalwart bagpiper, in complete Highland costume, appeared pacing to and fro on the green before the house, and the window being open, it seemed as if he might as well have been straining his lungs within the parlour. At a pause of his strenuous performance, Scott took occasion to explain that *John of Skye* was a recent acquisition to the rising hamlet of Abbotstown; that the man was a capital hedger and ditcher, and only figured with the pipe and philabeg on high occasions in the after-part of the day; "but indeed," he added, laughing, "I fear John will soon be discovering that the hook and mattock are unfavourable to his chanter hand." When the cloth was drawn, and the never-failing salver of *quaighs* introduced, John of Skye, upon some well-known signal, entered the room, but *en militaire*, without removing his bonnet, and taking his station behind the landlord, received from his hand the largest of the Celtic bickers brimful of Glenlivet. The man saluted the company in his own dialect, tipped off the contents (probably a quarter of an English pint of raw aquavitæ) at a gulp, wheeled about as solemnly as if the whole ceremony had been a movement on parade, and forthwith recommenced his pibrochs and gatherings, which continued until long after the ladies had left the table, and the autumnal moon was streaming in upon us so brightly as to dim the candles.

---

* I understand that this new celebrated soup was *extemporized* by M. Florence on Scott's first visit to Bowhill after the publication of Guy Mannering. Florence had *served*—and Scott having on some sporting party made his personal acquaintance, he used often afterwards to gratify the Poet's military propensities by sending up magnificent representations in pastry of citadels taken by the Emperor, &c.

I had never before seen Scott in such buoyant spirits as he showed this evening—and I never saw him in higher afterwards; and no wonder, for this was the first time that he, Lord Melville, and Adam Ferguson, daily companions at the High-school of Edinburgh, and partners in many joyous scenes of the early volunteer period, had met since the commencement of what I may call the serious part of any of their lives. The great poet and novelist was receiving them under his own roof, when his fame was at its *acmé*, and his fortune seemed culminating to about a corresponding height—and the generous exuberance of his hilarity might have overflowed without moving the spleen of a Cynic. Old stories of *the Yards* and *the Crosscauseway* were relieved by sketches of real warfare, such as none but Ferguson (or Charles Matthews, had he been a soldier) could ever have given; and they toasted the memory of *Greenbreeks* and the health of *the Beau* with equal devotion.

When we rose from table, Scott proposed that we should all ascend his western turret, to enjoy a moonlight view of the valley. The younger part of his company were too happy to do so: some of the seniors, who had tried the thing before, found pretexts for hanging back. The stairs were dark, narrow, and steep; but the Sheriff piloted the way, and at length there were as many on the top as it could well afford footing for. Nothing could be more lovely than the panorama; all the harsher and more naked features being lost in the delicious moonlight; the Tweed and the Gala winding and sparkling beneath our feet; and the distant ruins of Melrose appearing, as if carved of alabaster, under the black mass of the Eildons. The poet, leaning on his battlement, seemed to hang over the beautiful vision as if he had never seen it before. "If I live," he exclaimed, "I will build me a higher tower, with a more spacious platform, and a staircase better fitted for an old fellow's scrambling." The piper was heard retuning his instrument below, and he called to him for *Lochaber no more.* John of Skye obeyed, and as the music rose, softened by the distance, Scott repeated in a low key the melancholy words of the song of exile.

On descending from the tower, the whole company were assembled in the new dining-room, which was still under the hands of the carpenters, but had been brilliantly illuminated for the occasion. Mr Bruce took his station, and old and young danced reels to his melodious accompaniment until they were weary, while Scott and the Dominie looked on with gladsome faces, and beat time now and then, the one with his staff, the other with his wooden leg. A tray with mulled wine and whisky punch was then introduced, and Lord Melville proposed a bumper, with all the honours, to the *Roof-tree.* Captain Ferguson having sung *Johnnie Cope*, called on the young ladies for *Kenmure's on and awa'*; and our host then insisted that the whole party should join, standing in a circle hand-in-hand *more majorum*, in the hearty chorus of

"Weel may we a' be,
Ill may we never see,
God bless the king and the gude companie!"

—which being duly performed, all dispersed. Such was *the handsel*, for Scott protested against its being considered as *the house-heating*, of the new Abbotsford.

When I began this chapter I thought it would be a short one, but it is surprising how, when one digs into his memory, the smallest details of a scene that was interesting at the time, shall by degrees come to light again. I now recall, as if I had seen and heard them yesterday, the looks and words of eighteen years ago. Awaking between six and seven next morning, I heard Scott's voice close to me, and looking out of the little latticed window of the then detached cottage called *the chapel*, saw him and Tom Purdie pacing together on the green before the door, in earnest deliberation over what seemed to be a rude daub of a drawing, and every time they approached my end of their parade I was sure to catch the words *Blue Bank.* It turned out in the course of the day, that a field of clay near Toftfield went by this name, and that the draining of it was one of the chief operations then in hand. My friend Wilson, mean while, who lodged also in the chapel, tapped at my door, and asked me to rise and take a walk with him by the river, for he had some angling project in his head. He went out and joined in the consultation about the Blue Bank, while I was dressing; presently Scott hailed me at the casement, and said he had observed a volume of a new edition of Goethe on my table—would I lend it him for a little? He carried off the volume accordingly, and retreated with it to his den. It contained the Faust, and, I believe, in a more complete shape than he had before seen that masterpiece of his old favourite. When we met at breakfast a couple of hours after, he was full of the poem—dwelt with enthusiasm on the airy beauty of its lyrics, the terrible pathos of the scene before the *Mater Dolorosa*, and the deep skill shown in the various subtle shadings of character between Mephistophiles and poor Margaret. He remarked, however, of the Introduction (which I suspect was new to him) that blood would out—that, consummate artist as he was, Goethe was a German, and that nobody but a German would ever have provoked a comparison with the book of Job, "the grandest poem that ever was written." He added, that he suspected the end of the story had been left *in obscuro*, from despair to match the closing scene of our own Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Mr Wilson mentioned a report that Coleridge was engaged on a translation of the Faust. "I hope it is so," said Scott; "Coleridge made Schiller's Wallenstein far finer than he found it, and so he will do by this. No man has all the resources of poetry in such profusion, but he cannot manage them so as to bring out any thing of his own on a large scale at all worthy of his genius. He is like a lump of coal rich with gas, which lies expending itself in puffs and gleams, unless some shrewd body will clap it into a cast-iron box, and compel the compressed element to do itself justice. His fancy and diction would have long ago placed him above all his contemporaries, had they been under the direction of a sound judgment and a steady will.* I don't now expect a great original poem from Coleridge, but he might easily make a sort of fame for himself as a poetical translator, that would be a thing completely unique and *sui generis.*"

---

* In the Introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1830, Sir Walter says, "Were I ever to take the unbecoming freedom of censuring a man of Mr Coleridge's extraordinary talents, it would be on account of the caprice and indolence with which he has thrown from him, as in mere wantonness, those unfinished scraps of poetry, which, like the Torso of antiquity, defy the skill of his poetical brethren to complete them. The charming fragments which the author abandons to their fate, are surely too valuable to be treated like the proofs of careless engravers, the sweepings of whose studios often make the fortune of some pains-taking collector." And in a note to *The Abbot*, alluding to Coleridge's beautiful and tantalizing fragment of Christabel, he adds, "Has not our own imaginative poet cause to fear that future ages will desire to summon him from his place of rest, as Milton longed

'To call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold.'"

While this criticism proceeded, Scott was cutting away at his brown loaf and a plate of kippered salmon in a style which strongly reminded me of Dandie Dinmont's luncheon at Mump's Hall; nor was his German topic at all the predominant one. On the contrary, the sentences which have dwelt on my memory dropt from him now and then, in the pauses, as it were, of his main talk;—for though he could not help recurring, ever and anon, to the subject, it would have been quite out of his way to make any literary matter the chief theme of his conversation, when there was a single person present who was not likely to feel much interested in its discussion.—How often have I heard him quote on such occasions Mr Vellum's advice to the butler in Addison's excellent play of *the Drummer*—" Your conjuror, John, is indeed a twofold personage—but he *eats and drinks like other people!*"

I may, however, take this opportunity of observing, that nothing could have been more absurdly unfounded than the statement which I have seen repeated in various sketches of his Life and Manners, that he habitually abstained from conversation on literary topics. In point of fact, there were no topics on which he talked more openly or more earnestly; but he, when in society, lived and talked for the persons with whom he found himself surrounded, and if he did not always choose to enlarge upon the subjects which his companions for the time suggested, it was simply because he thought or fancied that these had selected, out of deference or flattery, subjects about which they really cared little more than they knew. I have already repeated, over and again, my conviction that Scott considered literature *per se*, as a thing of far inferior importance to the high concerns of political or practical life; but it would be too ridiculous to question that literature nevertheless engrossed, at all times and seasons, the greater part of his own interest and reflection: nor can it be doubted, that his general preference of the society of men engaged in the active business of the world, rather than that of, so called, literary people, was grounded substantially on his feeling that literature, worthy of the name, was more likely to be fed and nourished by the converse of the former than by that of the latter class.

Before breakfast was over the post-bag arrived, and its contents were so numerous, that Lord Melville asked Scott what election was on hand—not doubting that there must be some very particular reason for such a shoal of letters. He answered that it was much the same most days, and added, " though no one has kinder friends in the franking line, and though Freeling and Croker especially are always ready to stretch the point of privilege in my favour, I am nevertheless a fair contributor to the revenue, for I think my bill for letters seldom comes under L.150 a-year; and as to coach-parcels, they are a perfect ruination." He then told with high merriment a disaster that had lately befallen him. " One morning last spring," he said, " I opened a huge lump of a despatch, without looking how it was addressed, never doubting that it had travelled under some omnipotent frank like the First Lord of the Admiralty's, when, lo and behold, the contents proved to be a MS. play, by a young lady of New York, who kindly requested me to read and correct it, equip it with prologue and epilogue, procure for it a favourable reception from the manager of Drury Lane, and make Murray or Constable bleed handsomely for the copyright; and on inspecting the cover, I found that I had been charged five pounds odd for the postage. This was bad enough —but there was no help, so I groaned and submitted. A fortnight or so after another packet, of not less formidable bulk, arrived, and I was absent enough to break its seal too without examination. Conceive my horror when out jumped the same identical tragedy of *The Cherokee Lovers*, with a second epistle from the authoress, stating that, as the winds had been boisterous, she feared the vessel intrusted with her former communication might have foundered, and therefore judged it prudent to forward a duplicate."

Scott said he must retire to answer his letters, but that the sociable and the ponies would be at the door by one o'clock, when he proposed to show Melrose and Dryburgh to Lady Melville and any of the rest of the party that chose to accompany them; adding that his son Walter would lead any body who preferred a gun to the likeliest place for a black-cock, and that Charlie Purdie (Tom's brother) would attend upon Mr Wilson and whoever else chose to try a cast of the salmon-rod. He withdrew when all this was arranged, and appeared at the time appointed, with perhaps a dozen letters sealed for the post, and a coach-parcel addressed to James Ballantyne, which he dropt at the turnpike-gate as we drove to Melrose. Seeing it picked up by a dirty urchin, and carried into a hedge pothouse, where half-a-dozen nondescript wayfarers were smoking and tippling, I could not but wonder that it had not been the fate of some one of those innumerable packets to fall into unscrupulous hands, and betray the grand secret. That very morning we had seen two post-chaises drawn up at his gate, and the enthusiastic travellers, seemingly decent tradesmen and their families, who must have been packed in a manner worthy of Mrs Gilpin, lounging about to catch a glimpse of him at his going forth. But it was impossible in those days to pass between Melrose and Abbotsford without encountering some odd figure, armed with a sketch-book, evidently bent on a peep at the Great Unknown; and it must be allowed that many of these pedestrians looked as if they might have thought it very excusable to make prize, by hook or by crook, of a MS. chapter of the Tales of my Landlord.

Scott showed us the ruins of Melrose in detail; and as we proceeded to Dryburgh, descanted learnedly and sagaciously on the good effects which must have attended the erection of so many great monastic establishments in a district so peculiarly exposed to the inroads of the English in the days of the Border wars. " They were now and then violated," he said, " as their aspect to this hour bears witness; but for once that they suffered, any lay property similarly situated must have been *harried* a dozen times. The bold Dacres, Liddells, and Howards, that could get easy absolution at York or Durham for any ordinary breach of a truce with the Scots, would have had *to dree a heavy dole* had they confessed plundering from the fat brothers, of the same order perhaps, whose lines had fallen to them on the wrong side of the Cheviot." He enlarged too on the heavy penalty which the Crown of Scotland had paid for its rash acquiescence in the wholesale robbery of the church at the Reformation. " The proportion of the soil in the hands of the clergy had," he said, " been very great—too great to be continued. If we may judge by their share in the public burdens, they must have had nearly a third of the land in their possession. But this vast wealth was now distributed among a turbulent nobility, too powerful before; and the Stuarts soon found that in the bishops and lord abbots they had lost the only means of balancing their factions, so as to turn the scale in favour of law and order; and by and by the haughty barons themselves, who had scrambled for the worldly spoil of the church, found that the spiritual influence had been concentrated in hands as haughty as their own, and connected with no feelings likely to buttress their order any more than the Crown—a new and sterner monkery, under a different name, and essentially plebeian. Presently the Scotch were on the verge of republicanism, in state as well as kirk, and, I have sometimes thought, it was only the accession of King Jamie to the throne of England that could have given monarchy a chance of prolonging its existence here." One of his friends asked what he supposed might have been the annual revenue of the abbey of Melrose in its best day. He answered that he suspected, if all the sources of their income were now in clever hands, the produce could hardly be under L.100,000 a-year; and added, "making every allowance for modern improvements, there can be no question that the sixty brothers of Melrose divided a princely rental. The superiors were often men of very high birth, and the great majority of the rest were younger brothers of gentlemen's families. I fancy they may have been, on the whole, pretty near akin to your Fellows of All Souls—who, according to their statute, must be *bene nati, bene vestiti, et mediocriter docti.* They had a good house in Edinburgh, where, no doubt, my lord abbot and his chaplains maintained a hospitable table during the sittings of Parliament." Some one regretted that we had no lively picture of the enormous revolution in manners that must have followed the downfall of the ancient Church in Scotland. He observed that there were, he fancied, materials enough for constructing such a one, but that they were mostly scattered in records

—"of which," said he, "who knows any thing to the purpose except Tom Thomson and John Riddell? It is common to laugh at such researches, but they pay the good brains that meddle with them; and had Thomson been as diligent in setting down his discoveries as he has been in making them, he might, long before this time of day, have placed himself on a level with Ducange or Camden. The change in the country-side," he continued, "must indeed have been terrific; but it does not seem to have been felt very severely by a certain Boniface of St Andrews, for when somebody asked him, on the subsidence of the storm, what he thought of all that had occurred, 'Why,' answered mine host, 'it comes to this, that the moderautor sits in my meikle chair, where the dean sat before, and in place of calling for the third stoup of Bourdeaux, bids Jenny bring ben anither bowl of toddy.'"

At Dryburgh Scott pointed out to us the sepulchral aisle of his Haliburton ancestors, and said he hoped, in God's appointed time, to lay his bones among their dust. The spot was, even then, a sufficiently interesting and impressive one; but I shall not say more of it at present.

On returning to Abbotsford, we found Mrs Scott and her daughters doing penance under the merciless curiosity of a couple of tourists who had arrived from Selkirk soon after we set out for Melrose. They were rich specimens—tall, lanky young men, both of them rigged out in new jackets and trowsers of the Macgregor tartan; the one, as they had revealed, being a lawyer, the other a Unitarian preacher, from New England. These gentlemen, when told on their arrival that Mr Scott was not at home, had shown such signs of impatience, that the servant took it for granted they must have serious business, and asked if they would wish to speak a word with his lady. They grasped at this, and so conducted themselves in the interview, that Mrs Scott never doubted they had brought letters of introduction to her husband, and invited them accordingly to partake of her luncheon. They had been walking about the house and grounds with her and her daughters ever since that time, and appeared at the porch, when the Sheriff and his party returned to dinner, as if they had been already fairly enrolled on his visiting list. For the moment he too was taken in—he fancied that his wife must have received and opened their credentials—and shook hands with them with courteous cordiality. But Mrs Scott, with all her overflowing good-nature, was a sharp observer; and she, before a minute had elapsed, interrupted the ecstatic compliments of the strangers, by reminding them that her husband would be glad to have the letters of the friends who had been so good as to write by them. It then turned out that there were no letters to be produced;—and Scott, signifying that his hour for dinner approached, added, that as he supposed they meant to walk to Melrose, he could not trespass further on their time. The two lion-hunters seemed quite unprepared for this abrupt escape; but there was about Scott, in perfection, when he chose to exert it, the power of civil repulsion; he bowed the overwhelmed originals to his door, and on re-entering the parlour, found Mrs Scott complaining very indignantly that they had gone so far as to pull out their note-book, and beg an exact account, not only of his age—but of her own. Scott, already half relenting, laughed heartily at this misery. He observed, however, that, "if he were to take in all the world, he had better put up a sign-post at once—

> 'Porter, ale, and British spirits,
> Painted bright between twa trees;'

and that no traveller of respectability could ever be at a loss for such an introduction as would ensure his best hospitality." Still he was not quite pleased with what had happened—and as we were about to pass, half an hour afterwards, from the drawingroom to the dining-room, he said to his wife, "Hang the Yahoos, Charlotte—but we should have bid them stay dinner." "Devil a bit," quoth Captain John Ferguson, who had again come over from Huntly Burn, and had been latterly assisting the lady to amuse her Americans—"Devil a bit, my dear, they were quite in a mistake I could see. The one asked Madame whether she deigned to call her new house Tullyveolan or Tillytudlem—and the other, when Maida happened to lay his nose against the window, exclaimed *pro-di-gi-ous!* In short, they evidently meant all their humbug not for you, but for the culprit of Waverley, and the rest of that there rubbish." "Well, well, Skipper," was the reply,—"for a' that, the loons would hae been nane the waur o' their kail."

From this banter it may be inferred that the younger Ferguson had not as yet been told the Waverley secret—which to any of that house could never have been any mystery. Probably this, or some similar occasion soon afterwards, led to his formal initiation; for during the many subsequent years that the veil was kept on, I used to admire the tact with which, when in their topmost high-jinks humour, both "Captain John" and "The Auld Captain" eschewed any the most distant allusion to the affair.

And this reminds me that, at the period of which I am writing, none of Scott's own family, except of course his wife, had the advantage in that matter of the Skipper. Some of them too, were apt, like him, so long as no regular confidence had been reposed in them, to avail themselves of the author's reserve for their own sport among friends. Thus one morning, just as Scott was opening the door of the parlour, the rest of the party being already seated at the breakfast table, the Dominie was in the act of helping himself to an egg, marked with a peculiar hieroglyphic by Mrs Thomas Purdie, upon which Anne Scott, then a lively rattling girl of sixteen, lisped out, "That's a mysterious looking egg, Mr Thomson—what if it should have been meant for *the Great Unknown?*" Ere the Dominie could reply, her father advanced to the foot of the table, and having seated himself and deposited his stick on the carpet beside him, with a sort of whispered whistle—"What's that Lady Anne's* saying," quoth he; "I thought it had been well known that the *keelavined* egg must be a soft one for *the Sherra?*" And so he took his egg, and while we all smiled in silence, poor Anne said gaily, in the midst of her blushes, "Upon my word, papa, I thought Mr John Ballantyne might have been expected." This allusion to Johnny's glory in being considered as the accredited representative of Jedediah Cleishbotham, produced a laugh—at which the Sheriff frowned—and then laughed too.

I remember nothing particular about our second day's dinner, except that it was then I first met my dear and honoured friend William Laidlaw. The evening passed rather more quietly than the preceding one. Instead of the dance in the new dining-room, we had a succession of old ballads sung to the harp and guitar by the young ladies of the house; and Scott, when they seemed to have done enough, found some reason for taking down a volume of Crabbe, and read us one of his favourite tales—

---

* When playing, in childhood, with the young ladies of the Buccleuch family, she had been overheard saying to her namesake Lady Anne Scott, "Well, I do wish I were Lady Anne too—it is so much prettier than Miss;" thenceforth she was commonly addressed in the family by the coveted title.

> " Grave Jonas Kindred, Sybil Kindred's sire,
> Was six feet high, and looked six inches higher," &c.

But jollity revived in full vigour when the supper-tray was introduced; and to cap all merriment, Captain Ferguson dismissed us with the *Laird of Cockpen.* Lord and Lady Melville were to return to Melville Castle next morning, and Mr Wilson and I happened to mention, that we were engaged to dine and sleep at the seat of my friend and relation, Mr Pringle of Torwoodlee, on our way to Edinburgh. Scott immediately said that he would send word in the morning to the Laird, that he and Adam Ferguson meant to accompany us—such being the unceremonious style in which country neighbours in Scotland visit each other. Next day accordingly we all rode over together to Mr Pringle's beautiful seat—the " *distant Torwoodlee*" of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, but distant not above five or six miles from Abbotsford—coursing hares as we proceeded, but inspecting the antiquities of the *Catrail* to the interruption of our sport. We had another joyous evening at Torwoodlee. Scott and Ferguson returned home at night, and the morning after, as Wilson and I mounted for Edinburgh, our kind old host, his sides still sore with laughter, remarked that " the Sheriff and the Captain together were too much for any company."

There was much talk between the Sheriff and Mr Pringle about the Selkirkshire Yeomanry Cavalry, of which the latter had been the original commandant. Young Walter Scott had been for a year or more Cornet in the corps, and his father was consulting Torwoodlee about an entertainment which he meant to give them on his son's approaching birthday. It was then that the new dining-room was to be first *heated* in good earnest; and Scott very kindly pressed Wilson and myself, at parting, to return for the occasion—which, however, we found it impossible to do. The reader must therefore be satisfied with what is said about it in one of the following letters:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Rokeby.

"Abbotsford 5th Nov. 1818.

"My dear Morritt,

"Many thanks for your kind letter of 29th October. The matter of the colts being as you state, I shall let it lie over until next year, and then avail myself of your being in the neighbourhood to get a good pair of four-year-olds, since it would be unnecessary to buy them a year younger, and incur all the risks of disease and accident, unless they could have been had at a proportional under value.

"* * * * * * * leaves us this morning after a visit of about a week. He improves on acquaintance, and especially seems so pleased with every thing, that it would be very hard to quarrel with him. Certainly, as the Frenchman said, *il a un grand talent pour le silence.* I take the opportunity of his servant going direct to Rokeby to charge him with this letter, and a plaid which my daughters entreat you to accept of as a token of their *warm* good wishes. Seriously, you will find it a good bosom friend in an easterly wind, a black frost, or when your country avocations lead you to face a *dry wap of snow.* I find it by far the lightest and most comfortable integument which I can use upon such occasions.

"We had a grand jollification here last week: the whole troop of Forest Yeomanry dining with us. I assure you the scene was gay and even grand, with glittering sabres, waving standards, and screaming bagpipes;

and that it might not lack spectators of taste, who should arrive in the midst of the hurricane, but Lord and Lady Compton, whose presence gave a great zest to the whole affair. Every thing went off very well, and as cavalry have the great advantage over infantry that their *legs* never get drunk, they retired in decent disorder about ten o'clock. I was glad to see Lord and Lady Compton so very comfortable, and surrounded with so fine a family, the natural bond of mutual regard and affection. She has got very jolly, but otherwise has improved on her travels. I had a long chat with her, and was happy to find her quite contented and pleased with the lot she has drawn in life. It is a brilliant one in many respects to be sure; but still I have seen the story of the poor woman, who, after all rational subjects of distress had been successively remedied, tormented herself about the screaming of a neighbour's peacock—I say I have seen this so often realized in actual life, that I am more afraid of my friends making themselves uncomfortable, who have only imaginary evils to indulge, than I am for the peace of those who, battling magnanimously with real inconvenience and danger, find a remedy in the very force of the exertions to which their lot compels them.

"I sympathize with you for the *dole* which you are *dreeing* under the inflictions of your honest proser. Of all the boring machines ever devised, your regular and determined storyteller is the most peremptory and powerful in his operations. This is a rainy day, and my present infliction is an idle cousin, a great amateur of the pipes, who is performing incessantly in the next room for the benefit of a probationary minstrel, whose pipes scream *à la distance*, as the young hoarse cock-chicken imitates the gallant and triumphant screech of a veteran Sir Chanticleer. Yours affectionately,

W. SCOTT."

CHAPTER VII.

DECLINING HEALTH OF CHARLES DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—LETTER ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE—PROVINCIAL ANTIQUITIES, ETC.—EXTENSIVE SALE OF COPYRIGHTS TO CONSTABLE AND CO.—DEATH OF MR CHARLES CARPENTER—SCOTT RECEIVES AND ACCEPTS THE OFFER OF A BARONETCY—HE DECLINES TO RENEW HIS APPLICATION FOR A SEAT ON THE EXCHEQUER BENCH—LETTERS TO MORRITT—RICHARDSON—MISS BAILLIE—THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—LORD MONTAGU—CAPT. ADAM FERGUSON—ROB ROY PLAYED AT EDINBURGH—LETTER FROM JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM, TO MR CHARLES MACKAY—1818—1819.

I HAVE now to introduce a melancholy subject—one of the greatest afflictions that ever Scott encountered. The health of Charles Duke of Buccleuch was by this time beginning to give way, and Scott thought it his duty to intimate his very serious apprehensions to his noble friend's brother.

To the Right Hon. Lord Montagu, Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Edinburgh, 12th Nov., 1818.

"My dear Lord,

"I am about to write to you with feelings of the deepest anxiety. I have hesitated for two or three days whether I should communicate to your Lordship the sincere alarm which I entertain on account of the Duke's present state of health, but I have come to persuade myself, that it will be discharging a part of the duty which I owe to him to mention my own most distressing apprehensions. I was at the cattle-show on the 6th, and executed the delegated task of toastmaster, and so forth. I was told by * * * that the Duke is under the influence of the muriatic bath, which occasions a good deal of uneasiness when the medicine is in possession of the system. The Duke observed the strictest diet, and remained only a short time at table, leaving me to do the honours, which I did with a sorrowful heart, endeavouring, however, to persuade myself that * * *'s account, and the natural depression of spirits incidental to his finding himself unable for the time to discharge the duty to his guests, which no man could do with so much grace and kindness, were sufficient to account for the alteration of his manner and appearance. I spent Monday with him quietly and alone, and I must say that all I saw and heard was calculated to give me the greatest pain. His strength is much less, his spirits lower, and his general appearance far more unfavourable than when I left him at Drumlanrig a few weeks before. What * * *, and, indeed, what the Duke himself says of the medicine, may be true—but * * * is very sanguine, and, like all the personal physicians attached to a person of such consequence, he is too much addicted to the *placebo*—at least I think so—too apt to fear to give offence by contradiction, or by telling that sort of truth which may contravert the wishes or habits of his patient. I feel I am communicating much pain to your Lordship, but I am sure that, excepting yourself, there is not a man in the world whose sorrow and apprehension could exceed mine in having such a task to discharge; for, as your Lordship well knows, the ties which bind me to your excellent brother are of a much stronger kind than usually connect persons so different in rank. But the alteration in voice and person, in features, and in spirits, all argue the decay of natural strength, and the increase of some internal disorder, which is gradually triumphing over the system. Much has been done in these cases by change of climate. I hinted this to the Duke at Drumlanrig, but I found his mind totally averse to it. But he made some enquiries at Harden (just returned from Italy), which seemed to imply that at least the idea of a winter in Italy or the south of France was not altogether out of his consideration. Your Lordship will consider whether he can or ought to be pressed upon this point. He is partial to Scotland, and feels the many high duties which bind him to it. But the air of this country, with its alternations of moisture and dry frost, although excellent for a healthy person, is very trying to a valetudinarian.

" I should not have thought of volunteering to communicate such unpleasant news, but that the family do not seem alarmed. I am not surprised at this, because, where the decay of health is very gradual, it is more easily traced by a friend who sees the patient from interval to interval, than by the affectionate eyes which are daily beholding him.

" Adieu, my dear Lord. God knows you will scarce read this letter with more pain than I feel in writing it. But it seems indispensable to me to communicate my sentiments of the Duke's present situation to his nearest relation and dearest friend. His life is invaluable to his country and to his family, and how dear it is to his friends can only be estimated by those who know the soundness of his understanding, the uprightness and truth of his judgment, and the generosity and warmth of his feelings. I am always, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

" WALTER SCOTT."

Scott's letters of this and the two following months are very much occupied with the painful subject of the Duke of Buccleuch's health; but those addressed to his Grace himself are, in general, in a more jocose strain than usual. His friend's spirits were sinking, and he exerted himself in this way, in the hope of amusing the hours of langour at Bowhill. These letters are headed "Edinburgh Gazette Extraordinary," No. 1, No. 2, and so on; but they deal so much in laughable gossip about persons still living, that I find it difficult to make any extracts from them. The following paragraphs, however, from the Gazette of November the 20th, give a little information as to his own minor literary labours :—

"The article on Gourgaud's Narrative* *is* by a certain *Vieux Routier* of your Grace's acquaintance, who would willingly have some military hints from you for the continuation of the article, if at any time you should feel disposed to amuse yourself with looking at the General's most marvellous performance. His lies are certainly like the father who begot them. Do not think that at any time the little trumpery intelligence this place affords can interrupt my labours, while it amuses your Grace. I can scribble as fast in the Court of Session as any where else, without the least loss of time or hinderance of business. At the same time, I cannot help laughing at the miscellaneous trash I have been putting out of my hand and the various motives which made me undertake the jobs. An article for the Edinburgh Review†—this for the love of Jeffrey, the editor—the first for ten years. Do., being the article Drama for the

---

* Article on General Gourgaud's Memoirs in Blackwood's Magazine for November, 1818.

† Article on Maturin's *Women, or Pour et Contre.* (Misc. Prose Works, Vol. xviii.)

Encyclopedia—this for the sake of Mr Constable, the publisher. Do. for the Blackwoodian Magazine—this for love of the cause I espoused. Do. for the Quarterly Review*—this for the love of myself, I believe, or, which is the same thing, for the love of L.100, which I wanted for some odd purpose. As all these folks fight like dog and cat among themselves, my situation is much like the *Suave mare magno*, and so forth. . . .

"I hope your Grace will never think of answering the Gazettes at all, or even replying to letters of business, until you find it quite convenient and easy. The Gazette will continue to appear as materials occur. Indeed I expect, in the end of next week, to look in upon Bowhill, per the Selkirk mail, about eight at night, with the hope of spending a day there, which will be more comfortable than at Abbotsford, where I should feel like a mouse below a firlot. If I find the Court can spare so important a person for one day, I shall order my pony up to meet me at Bowhill, and, supposing me to come on Friday night, I can easily return by the Blucher on Monday, dining and sleeping at Huntly Burn on the Sunday. So I shall receive all necessary reply in person."

Good Queen Charlotte died on the 17th of this month; and in writing to Mr Morritt on the 21st, Scott thus expresses what was, I believe, the universal feeling at the moment:—

"So we have lost the old Queen. She has only had the sad prerogative of being kept alive by nursing for some painful weeks, whereas perhaps a subject might have closed the scene earlier. I fear the effect of this event on public manners—were there but a weight at the back of the drawingroom door, which would slam it in the face of w——s, its fall ought to be lamented; and I believe that poor Charlotte really adopted her rules of etiquette upon a feeling of duty. If we should suppose the Princess of Wales to have been at the head of the matronage of the land for these last ten years, what would have been the difference on public opinion! No man of experience will ever expect the breath of a court to be favourable to correct morals—*sed si non caste caute tamen.* One half of the mischief is done by the publicity of the evil, which corrupts those which are near its influence, and fills with disgust and apprehension those to whom it does not directly extend. Honest old Evelyn's account of Charles the Second's court presses on one's recollection, and prepares the mind for anxious apprehensions."

---

* Article on Childe Harold, Canto IV. (Misc. Prose Works, Vol. xvii.)

Towards the end of this month Scott received from his kind friend Lord Sidmouth, then Secretary of State for the Home Department, the formal announcement of the Prince Regent's desire (which had been privately communicated some months earlier through the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam) to confer on him the rank of Baronet. When Scott first heard of the Regent's gracious intention, he had signified considerable hesitation about the prudence of his accepting any such accession of rank; for it had not escaped his observation, that such airy sounds, however modestly people may be disposed to estimate them, are apt to entail in the upshot additional cost upon their way of living, and to affect accordingly the plastic fancies, feelings, and habits of their children. But Lord Sidmouth's letter happened to reach him a few days after he had heard of the sudden death of his wife's brother, Charles Carpenter, who had bequeathed the reversion of his fortune to his sister's family;

and this circumstance disposed Scott to wave his scruples, chiefly with a view to the professional advantage of his eldest son, who had by this time fixed on the life of a soldier. As is usually the case, the estimate of Mr Carpenter's property transmitted at the time to England proved to have been an exaggerated one; as nearly as my present information goes, the amount was doubled. But as to the only question of any interest, to wit, how Scott himself felt on all these matters at the moment, the following letter to one whom he had long leaned to as a brother, will be more satisfactory than any thing else it is in my power to quote:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M.P., Rokeby.

"Edinburgh, 7th December, 1818.

"My dear Morritt,

"I know you are indifferent to nothing that concerns us, and therefore I take an early opportunity to acquaint you with the mixture of evil and good which has very lately befallen us. On Saturday last we had the advice of the death of my wife's brother Charles Carpenter, commercial resident at Salem, in the Madras Establishment. This event has given her great distress. She has not, that we know of, a single blood-relation left in the world, for her uncle, the Chevalier de la Volere, colonel of a Russian regiment, is believed to have been killed in the campaign of 1813.* My wife has been very unwell for two days, and is only now sitting up and mixing with us. She has that sympathy which we are all bound to pay, but feels she wants that personal interest in her sorrow which could only be grounded on a personal acquaintance with the deceased.

---

* I know nothing of the history or fate of this gentleman, except that he was an ardent royalist, and emigrated from France early in the Revolution.

"Mr Carpenter has, with great propriety, left his property in life-rent to his wife—the capital to my children. It seems to amount to about L.40,000. Upwards of L.30,000 is in the British funds, the rest, to an uncertain value, in India. I hope this prospect of independence will not make my children different from that which they have usually been—docile, dutiful, and affectionate. I trust it will not. At least, the first expression of their feelings was honourable, for it was a unanimous wish to give up all to their mother. This I explained to them was out of the question; but that if they should be in possession at any time of this property, they ought, among them, to settle an income of L.400 or L.500 on their mother for her life, to supply her with a fund at her own uncontrolled disposal, for any indulgence or useful purpose that might be required. Mrs Scott will stand in no need of this, but it is a pity to let kind affections run to waste; and if they never have it in their power to pay such a debt, their willingness to have done so will be a pleasant reflection. I am Scotchman enough to hate the breaking up of family ties, and the too close adherence to personal property. For myself, this event makes me neither richer nor poorer *directly*, but indirectly it will permit me to do something for my poor brother Tom's family, besides pleasing myself in '*plantings*, and *policies*, and *biggings*,'* with a safe conscience.

"There is another thing I have to whisper to your faithful ear. Our fat friend being desirous to honour Literature in my unworthy person, has intimated to me, by his organ the Doctor, that, with consent ample and unanimous of all the potential voices of all his ministers, each more happy than another of course on so joyful an occasion, he proposes to dub me Baronet. It would be easy saying a parcel of fine things about my contempt of rank, and so forth; but although I would not have gone a step out of my way to have asked, or bought, or begged, or borrowed a distinction, which to me personally will rather be inconvenient than otherwise, yet, coming as it does directly from the source of feudal honours, and as an honour, I am really gratified with it;—especially as it is intimated, that it is his Royal Highness's pleasure to heat the oven for me expressly, without waiting till he has some new *batch* of Baronets ready in dough. In plain English, I am to be gazetted *per se*. My poor friend Carpenter's bequest to my family has taken away a certain degree of *impecuniosity*, a necessity of saving cheese-parings and candle-ends, which always looks inconsistent with any little pretension to rank. But as things now stand, Advance banners in the name of God and Saint Andrew. Remember, I anticipate the jest, 'I like not such grinning honours, as Sir Walter hath.'* After all, if one must speak for themselves, I have my quarters and emblazonments, free of all stain but Border theft and High Treason, which I hope are gentlemanlike crimes; and I hope Sir Walter Scott will not sound worse than Sir Humphry Davy, though my merits are as much under his, in point of utility, as can well be imagined. But a name is something, and mine is the better of the two. Set down this flourish to the account of national and provincial pride, for you must know we have more Messieurs de Sotenville† in our Border counties than any where else in the Lowlands—I cannot say for the Highlands. The Duke of Buccleuch, greatly to my joy, resolves to France for a season. Adam Ferguson goes with him, to glad him by the way. Charlotte and the young folks join in kind compliments. Most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

---

* I believe this is a quotation from some old Scotch chronicler on the character of King James V.

---

* Sir Walter Blunt—1 King Henry IV., Act V. Scene 3.

† See Moliere's "George Dandin."

A few additional circumstances are given in a letter of the same week to Joanna Baillie. To her, after mentioning the testamentary provisions of Mr Carpenter, Scott says,—

"My dear Friend, I am going to tell you a little secret. I have changed my mind, or rather existing circumstances have led to my altering my opinions in a case of sublunary honour. I have now before me Lord Sidmouth's letter, containing the Prince's gracious and unsolicited intention to give me a Baronetcy. It will neither make me better nor worse than I feel myself—in fact, it will be an incumbrance rather than otherwise; but it may be of consequence to Walter, for the title is worth something in the army, although not in a learned profession. The Duke of Buccleuch and Scott of Harden, who, as the heads of my clan and the sources of my gentry, are good judges of what I ought to do, have both given me their earnest opinion to accept of an honour directly derived from the source of honour, and neither begged nor bought, as is the usual fashion. Several of my ancestors bore the title in the 17th century; and were it of consequence, I have no reason to be ashamed of the decent and respectable persons who connect me with that period when they carried into the field, like Madoc—

'The crescent, at whose gleam the *Cambrian* oft,
Cursing his perilous tenure, wound his horn'—

so that, as a gentleman, I may stand on as good a footing as other new creations. Respecting the reasons peculiar to myself which have made the Prince show his respect for general literature in my person, I cannot be a good judge, and your friendly zeal will make you a partial one: the purpose is fair, honourable, and creditable to the Sovereign, even though it should number him among the monarchs who made blunders in literary patronage. You know Pope says—

> ' The Hero William, and the Martyr Charles,
> One knighted Blackmore, and one pension'd Quarles.'*

So let the intention sanctify the error, if there should be one, on this great occasion. The time of this grand affair is uncertain; it is coupled with an invitation to London, which it would be inconvenient to me to accept, unless it should happen that I am called to come up by the affairs of poor Carpenter's estate. Indeed, the prospects of my children form the principal reason for a change of sentiments upon this flattering offer, joined to my belief that, though I may still be a scribbler from inveterate habit, I shall hardly engage again in any work of consequence.

" We had a delightful visit from the Richardsons, only rather too short; he will give you a picture of Abbotsford, but not as it exists in my mind's eye, waving with all its future honours. The pinasters are thriving very well, and in a year or two more Joanna's Bower will be worthy of the name. At present it is like Sir Roger de Coverley's portrait, which hovered between its resemblance to the good knight and to a Saracen. Now the said bower has still such a resemblance to its original character of a gravel pit, that it is not fit to be shown to ' bairns and fools,' who, according to our old canny proverb, should never see half done work; but Nature, if she works slowly, works surely, and your laurels at Abbotsford will soon flourish as fair as those you have won on Parnassus. I rather fear that a quantity of game which was shipped awhile ago at Inverness for the Doctor, never reached him: it is rather a transitory commodity in London; there were ptarmigan, grouse, and black game. I shall be grieved if they have miscarried. My health, thank God, continues as strong as at any period in my life; only I think of rule and diet more than I used to do, and observe as much as in me lies the advice of my friendly physician, who took such kind care of me; my best respects attend him, Mrs Baillie, and Mrs Agnes. Ever, my dear friend, most faithfully yours, W. S."

---

* Imitations of Horace, B. ii. Ep. 1. v. 386.

In the next of these letters Scott alludes, among other things, to a scene of innocent pleasure which I often witnessed afterwards. The whole of the ancient ceremonial of the *daft days*, as they are called in Scotland, obtained respect at Abbotsford. He said it was *uncanny*, and would certainly have felt it very uncomfortable, not to welcome the new year in the midst of his family and a few old friends, with the immemorial libation of a *het pint;* but of all the consecrated ceremonies of the time none gave him such delight as the visit which he received as *Laird* from all the children on his estate, on the last morning of every December—when, in the words of an obscure poet often quoted by him,

> "The cottage bairns sing blythe and gay,
> At the ha' door for *hogmanay*."

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Abbotsford, 1st January, 1819.

"My dear Friend,

"Many thanks for your kind letter: ten brace of ptarmigan sailed from Inverness about the 24th, directed for Dr Baillie; if they should have reached, I hope you would seize some for yourself and friends, as I learn the Doctor is on duty at Windsor. I do not know the name of the vessel, but they were addressed to Dr Baillie, London, which I trust was enough, for there are not *two*. The Doctor has been exercising his skill upon my dear friend and chief, the Duke of Buccleuch, to whom I am more attached than to any person beyond the reach of my own family, and has advised him to do what, by my earnest advice, he ought to have done three years ago—namely, to go to Lisbon: he left this vicinity with much reluctance to go to Thoulouse, but if he will be advised, should not stop save in Portugal or the south of Spain. The Duke is one of those retired and high-spirited men who will never be known until the world asks what became of the huge oak that grew on the brow of the hill, and sheltered such an extent of ground. During the late distress, though his own immense rents remained in arrears, and though I know he was pinched for money, as all men were, but more especially the possessors of entailed estates, he absented himself from London in order to pay with ease to himself the labourers employed on his various estates. These amounted (for I have often seen the roll and helped to check it) to nine hundred and fifty men, working at day wages, each of whom on a moderate average might maintain three persons, since the single men have mothers, sisters, and aged or very young relations to protect and assist. Indeed it is wonderful how much even a small sum, comparatively, will do in supporting the Scottish labourer, who is in his natural state perhaps one of the best, most intelligent, and kind-hearted of human beings; and in truth I have limited my other habits of expense very much since I fell into the habit of employing mine honest people. I wish you could have seen about a hundred children, being almost entirely supported by their fathers' or brothers' labour, come down yesterday to dance to the pipes, and get a piece of cake and bannock, and pence a-piece (no very deadly largess) in honour of *hogmanay*. I declare to you, my dear friend, that when I thought the poor fellows who kept these children so neat, and well taught, and well behaved, were slaving the whole day for eighteenpence or twenty-pence at the most, I was ashamed of their gratitude, and of their becks and bows. But after all, one does what one can, and it is better twenty families should be comfortable according to their wishes and habits, than half that number should be raised above their situation. Besides, like Fortunio in the fairy tale, I have my gifted men—the best wrestler and cudgel-player—the best runner and leaper—the best shot in the little district; and as I am partial to all manly and athletic exercises, these are great favourites, being otherwise decent persons, and bearing their faculties meekly. All this smells of sad egotism, but what can I write to you about save what is uppermost in my own thoughts; and here am I, thinning old plantations and planting new ones; now undoing what has been done, and now doing what I suppose no one would do but myself, and accomplishing all my magical transformations by the arms and legs of the aforesaid genii, conjured up to my aid at eighteen-pence a-day. There is no one with me but my wife, to whom the change of scene and air, with the facility of easy and uninterrupted exercise, is of service. The young people remain in Edinburgh to look after their lessons, and Walter, though passionately fond of shooting, only staid three days with us, his mind running entirely on mathematics and fortification, French and German. One of the excellencies of Abbotsford is very bad pens and ink; and besides, this being New Year's Day, and my writing-room above the servants' hall, the progress of my correspondence is a little interrupted by the Piper singing Gaelic songs to the servants, and their applause in consequence. Adieu, my good and indulgent friend: the best influences of the New Year attend you and yours, who so well deserve all that they can bring. Most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Before quitting the year 1818, I ought to have mentioned that among Scott's miscellaneous occupations in its autumn, he found time to contribute some curious materials toward a new edition of Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland, which had been undertaken by his old acquaintance, Mr Robert Jameson. During the winter session he appears to have made little progress with his novel; his painful seizures of cramp were again recurring frequently, and he probably thought it better to allow the story of Lammermoor to lie over until his health should be re-established. In the mean time he drew up a set of topographical and historical essays, which originally appeared in the successive numbers of the splendidly illustrated work, entitled Provincial Antiquities of Scotland.* But he did this merely to gratify his own love of the subject, and because, well or ill, he must be doing something. He declined all pecuniary recompense; but afterwards, when the success of the publication was secure, accepted from the proprietors some of the beautiful drawings by Turner, Thomson, and other artists, which had been prepared to accompany his text. These drawings are now in the little breakfast room at Abbotsford—the same which had been constructed for his own den, and which I found him occupying as such in the spring of 1819.

In the course of December, 1818, he also opened an important negotiation with Messrs Constable, which was completed early in the ensuing year. The cost of his building had, as is usual, exceeded his calculation; and he had both a large addition to it, and some new purchases of land in view. Moreover, his eldest son had now fixed on the cavalry, in which service every step infers very considerable expense. The details of this negotiation are remarkable; Scott considered himself as a very fortunate man when Constable, who at first offered L.10,000 for all his then existing copyrights, agreed to give for them L.12,000. Meeting a friend in the street, just after the deed had been executed, he said he wagered no man could guess at how large a price Constable had estimated his "eild kye" (cows barren from age). The copyrights thus transferred were, as specified in the instrument—

---

* These charming essays are now reprinted in his Miscellaneous Prose Works (Edit. 1834), Vol. vii.

"The said Walter Scott, Esq.'s present share, being the entire copyright, of Waverley.
Do. do. Guy Mannering.
Do. do. Antiquary.
Do. do. Rob Roy.
Do. do. Tales of my Landlord, 1st series.
Do. do. do. 2d series.
Do. do. do. 3d series.
Do. do. Bridal of Triermain.
Do. do. Harold the Dauntless.
Do. do. Sir Tristrem.
Do. do. Roderick Collection.
Do. do. Paul's Letters.
Do. being one eighth of the Lay of the Last Minstrel.
Do. being one half of the Lady of the Lake.
Do. being one half of Rokeby.
Do. being one half of the Lord of the Isles."

The instrument contained a clause binding Messrs Constable never to divulge the name of the Author of Waverley during his life under a penalty of L.2000.

I may observe, that had these booksellers fulfilled their part of this agreement, by paying off prior to their insolvency in 1826, the whole bonds for L.12,000, which they signed on the 2d of February, 1819, no interest in the copyrights above specified could have been expected to revert to the Author of Waverley; but more of this in due season.

He alludes to the progress of the treaty in the following letter to Captain Adam Ferguson, who had, as has already appeared, left Scotland with the Duke of Buccleuch. His Grace hearing, when in London, that one of the Barons of Exchequer at Edinburgh meant speedily to resign, the Captain had, by his desire, written to urge on Scott the propriety of renewing his application for a seat on that bench; which, however, Scott at once refused to do. There were several reasons for this abstinence; among others, he thought such a promotion at this time would interfere with a project which he had formed of joining "the Chief and the Aid-de-camp" in the course of the spring, and accomplishing in their society the tour of Portugal and Spain—perhaps of Italy also. Some such excursion had been strongly recommended to him by his own physicians, as the likeliest means of interrupting those habits of sedulous exertion at the desk, which they all regarded as the true source of his recent ailments, and the only serious obstacle to his cure; and his standing as a Clerk of Session, considering how largely he had laboured in that capacity for infirm brethren, would have easily secured him a twelvemonth's leave of absence from the Judges of his Court. But the principal motive was, as we shall see, his reluctance to interfere with the claims of the then Sheriff of Mid-Lothian, his own and Ferguson's old friend and schoolfellow, Sir William Rae—who, however, accepted the more ambitious post of Lord Advocate, in the course of the ensuing summer.

To Captain Adam Ferguson, Ditton Park, Windsor.

"15th January, 1819.

"Dear Adam,

"Many thanks for your kind letter, this moment received. I would not for the world stand in Jackie (I beg his pardon, Sir John) Peartree's way.* He has merited the cushion *en haut,* and besides he needs it. To me it would make little difference in point of income. The *otium cum dignitate,* if it ever come, will come as well years after this as now. Besides, I am afraid the opening will be soon made, through the death of our dear friend the Chief Baron, of whose health the accounts are unfavourable. Immediate promotion would be inconvenient to me, rather than otherwise, because I have the desire, like an old fool as I am, *courir un peu le monde.* I am beginning to draw out from my literary commerce. Constable has offered me L.10,000 for the copyrights of published works which have already produced more than twice the sum. I stand out for L.12,000. Tell this to the Duke; he knows how I managed to keep the hen till the rainy day was past. I will write two lines to Lord Melville, just to make my bow for the present, resigning any claims I have through the patronage of my kindest and best friend, for I have no other, till the next opportunity. I should have been truly vexed if the Duke had thought of writing about this. I don't wish to hear from him till I can have his account of the lines of Torres Vedras. I care so little how or where I travel, that I am not sure at all whether I shall not come to Lisbon and surprise you, instead of going to Italy by Switzerland; that is, providing the state of Spain would allow me, without any unreasonable danger of my throat, to get from Lisbon to Madrid, and thence to Gibraltar. I am determined to roll a little about, for I have lost much of my usual views of summer pleasure here. But I trust we shall have one day the Maid of Lorn (recovered of her lameness), and Charlie Stuart (reconciled to bogs), and Sybil Grey (no longer retrograde), and the Duke set up by a southern climate, and his military and civil aides-de-camp, with all the rout of younkers and dogs, and a brown hill side, introductory to a good dinner at Bowhill or Drumlanrig, and a merry evening. Amen, and God send it. As to my mouth being stopped with the froth of the title, that is, as the learned Partridge says, *a non sequitur*. You know the schoolboy's expedient of first asking mustard for his beef, and then beef for his mustard. Now, as they put the mustard on my plate, without my asking it, I shall consider myself, time and place serving, as entitled to ask a slice of beef; that is to say, I would do so if I cared much about it; but as it is, I trust it to time and chance, which, as you, dear Adam, know, have (added to the exertions of kind friends) been wonderful allies of mine. People usually wish their letters to come to hand, but I hope you will not receive this in Britain. I am impatient to hear you have sailed. All here are well and hearty. The Baronet * and I propose to go up to the Castle to-morrow to fix on the most convenient floor of the Crown House for your mansion, in hopes you will stand treat for gin-grog and Cheshire cheese on your return, to reward our labour. The whole expense will fall within the Treasury order, and it is important to see things made convenient. I will write a long letter to the Duke to Lisbon. Yours ever,

---

* *Jackie Peartree* had, it seems, been Sir William Rae's nickname at the High School. He probably owed it to some exploit in an orchard.

WALTER SCOTT.

---

* Mr William Clerk.

" P. S.—No news here, but that the goodly hulk of conceit and tallow, which was called Macculloch, of the Royal Hotel, Prince's Street, was put to bed dead-drunk on Wednesday night, and taken out the next morning dead-by-itself-dead. Mair skaith at Sheriff-muir."

To J. Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.

" Edinburgh, 18th January, 1819.

" My dear Richardson,

" Many thanks to you for your kind letter. I own I did mystify Mrs. * * * * * a little about the report you mention; and I am glad to hear the finesse succeeded.* She came up to me with a great overflow of gratitude for the delight and pleasure, and so forth, which she owed to me on account of these books. Now, as she knew very well that I had never owned myself the author, this was not *polite* politeness, and she had no right to force me up into a corner and compel me to tell her a word more than I chose, upon a subject which concerned no one but myself—and I have no notion of being pumped by any old dowager Lady of Session, male or female. So I gave in dilatory defences, under protestation to add and eke; for I trust, in learning a new slang, you have not forgot the old. In plain words, I denied the charge, and as she insisted to know who else *could* write these novels, I suggested Adam Ferguson as a person having all the information and capacity necessary for that purpose. But the inference that he *was* the author was of her own deducing; and thus ended her attempt, notwithstanding her having primed the pump with a good dose of flattery. It is remarkable, that among all my real friends to whom I did not choose to communicate this matter, not one ever thought it proper or delicate to tease me about it. Respecting the knighthood, I can only say, that coming as it does, and I finding myself and my family in circumstances which will not render the *petit titre* ridiculous, I think there would be more vanity in declining than in accepting what is offered to me by the express wish of the Sovereign as a mark of favour and distinction. Will you be so kind as to enquire and let me know what the fees, &c., of a baronetcy amount to—for I must provide myself accordingly, not knowing exactly when this same title may descend upon me. I am afraid the sauce is rather smart. I should like also to know what is to be done respecting registration of arms, and so forth. Will you make these enquiries for me *sotto voce?* I should not suppose, from the persons who sometimes receive this honour, that there is any enquiry about descent or genealogy; mine were decent enough folks, and enjoyed the honour in the seventeenth century, so I shall not be first of the title; and it will sound like that of a Christian knight, as Sir Sidney Smith said.

---

* The wife of one of the Edinburgh Judges is alluded to.

"I had a letter from our immortal Joanna some fortnight since, when I was enjoying myself at Abbotsford. Never was there such a season, flowers springing, birds singing, grubs eating the wheat—as if it was the end of May. After all, nature had a grotesque and inconsistent appearance, and I could not help thinking she resembled a withered beauty who persists in looking youthy, and dressing conform thereto. I thought the loch should have had its blue frozen surface, and russet all about it, instead of an unnatural gaiety of green. So much are we the children of habit, that we cannot always enjoy thoroughly the alterations which are most for our advantage. They have filled up the historical chair here. I own I wish it had been with our friend

Campbell, whose genius is such an honour to his country. But he has cast anchor I suppose in the south. Your friend, Mrs Scott, was much cast down with her brother's death. His bequest to my family leaves my own property much at my own disposal, which is pleasant enough. I was foolish enough sometimes to be vexed at the prospect of my library being sold *sub hasta*, which is now less likely to happen. I always am, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 15th of February, 1819, Scott witnessed the first representation, on the Edinburgh boards, of the most meritorious and successful of all the *Terry-fications*, though Terry himself was not the manufacturer. The drama of *Rob Roy* will never again be got up so well, in all its parts, as it then was by William Murray's company; the manager's own *Captain Thornton* was excellent—and so was the *Dugald Creature* of a Mr Duff—there was also a good *Mattie*—(about whose equipment, by the by, Scott felt such interest that he left his box between the Acts to remind Mr Murray that she "must have a mantle with her lanthorn");—but the great and unrivalled attraction was the personification of *Bailie Jarvie* by Charles Mackay, who, being himself a native of Glasgow, entered into the minutest peculiarities of the character with high *gusto*, and gave the west country dialect in its most racy perfection. It was extremely diverting to watch the play of Scott's features during this admirable realization of his conception; and I must add, that the behaviour of the Edinburgh audience on all such occasions, while the secret of the novels was preserved, reflected great honour on their good taste and delicacy of feeling. He seldom, in those days, entered his box without receiving some mark of general respect and admiration; but I never heard of any pretext being laid hold of to connect these demonstrations with the piece he had come to witness, or, in short, to do or say any thing likely to interrupt his quiet enjoyment of the evening in the midst of his family and friends. The *Rob Roy* had a continued run of forty-one nights, during February and March; and it was played once a week, at least, for many years afterwards.* Mackay, of course, always selected it for his benefit; and I now print from Scott's MS. a letter, which, no doubt, reached the mimic Bailie in the handwriting of one of the Ballantynes, on the first of these occurrences.

To Mr Charles Mackay, Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh.
Private.

"Friend Mackay,

"My lawful occasions having brought me from my residence at Gandercleuch to this great city, it was my lot to fall into company with certain friends, who impetrated from me a consent to behold the stage-play, which hath been framed forth of an history entitled Rob (*seu potius* Robert) Roy, which history, although it existeth not in mine erudite work, entitled Tales of my Landlord, hath nathless a near relation in style and structure to those pleasant narrations. Wherefore, having surmounted those arguments whilk were founded upon the unseemliness of a personage in my place and profession appearing in an open stage-play house, and having buttoned the terminations of my cravat into my bosom, in order to preserve mine incognito, and indued an outer coat over mine usual garments, so that the hue thereof might not betray my calling, I did place myself (much elbowed by those who little knew whom they did incommode) in that place of the Theatre called the two-shilling gallery, and beheld the show with great delectation, even from the rising of the curtain to the fall thereof.

---

* "Between February 15th, 1819, and March 14th, 1837, Rob Roy was played in the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh, 285 times." *Letter from Mr W. Murray.*

"Chiefly, my facetious friend, was I enamoured of the very lively representation of Bailie Nicol Jarvie, in so much that I became desirous to communicate to thee my great admiration thereof, nothing doubting that it will give thee satisfaction to be apprised of the same. Yet further, in case thou shouldst be of that numerous class of persons who set less store by good words than good deeds, and understanding that there is assigned unto each stage-player a special night, called a benefit (it will do thee no harm to know that the phrase cometh from two Latin words, *bene* and *facio*), on which their friends and patrons show forth their benevolence, I now send thee mine in the form of a five-ell web (*hoc jocose*, to express a note for L.5), as a meet present for the Bailie, himself a weaver, and the son of a worthy deacon of that craft. The which propine I send thee in token that it is my purpose, business and health permitting, to occupy the central place of the pit on the night of thy said beneficiary or benefit.

"Friend Mackay! from one, whose profession it is to teach others, thou must excuse the freedom of a caution. I trust thou wilt remember that, as excellence in thine art cannot be attained without much labour, so neither can it be extended, or even maintained, without constant and unremitted exertion; and farther, that the decorum of a performer's private character (and it gladdeth me to hear that thine is respectable) addeth not a little to the value of his public exertions.

"Finally, in respect there is nothing perfect in this world,—at least I have never received a wholly faultless version from the very best of my pupils—I pray thee not to let Rob Roy twirl thee around in the ecstacy of thy joy, in regard it oversteps the limits of nature, which otherwise thou so sedulously preservest in thine admirable national portraicture of Bailie Nicol Jarvie.—I remain thy sincere friend and well-wisher,

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM."

CHAPTER VIII.

RECURRENCE OF SCOTT'S ILLNESS—DEATH OF THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—LETTERS TO CAPTAIN FERGUSON—LORD MONTAGU—MR SOUTHEY—AND MR SHORTREED—SCOTT'S SUFFERINGS WHILE DICTATING THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR—ANECDOTES BY JAMES BALLANTYNE, ETC.—APPEARANCE OF THE THIRD SERIES OF TALES OF MY LANDLORD—ANECDOTE OF THE EARL OF BUCHAN.—MARCH—JUNE, 1819.

It had been Scott's purpose to spend the Easter vacation in London, and receive his baronetcy; but this was prevented by the serious recurrence of the malady which so much alarmed his friends in the early part of the year 1817, and which had continued ever since to torment him at intervals. The subsequent correspondence will show that afflictions of various sorts were accumulated on his head at the same period:—

To the Lord Montagu, Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Edinburgh, 4th March, 1819.

"My dear Lord,

"The Lord President tells me he has a letter from his son, Captain Charles Hope, R.N., who had just taken leave of our High Chief, upon the deck of the Liffey. He had not seen the Duke for a fortnight, and was pleasingly surprised to find his health and general appearance so very much improved. For my part, having watched him with such unremitting attention, I feel very confident in the effect of a change of air and of climate. It is with great pleasure that I find the Duke has received an answer from me respecting a matter about which he was anxious, and on which I could make his mind quite easy. His Grace wished Adam Ferguson to assist him as his confidential secretary; and with all the scrupulous delicacy that belongs to his character, he did not like to propose this, except through my medium as a common friend. Now, I can answer for Adam, as I can for myself, that he will have the highest pleasure in giving assistance in every possible way the Duke can desire; and if forty years' intimacy can entitle one man to speak for another, I believe the Duke can find no where a person so highly qualified for such a confidential situation. He was educated for business, understands it well, and was long a military secretary—his temper and manners your Lordship can judge as well as I can, and his worth and honour are of the very first water. I confess I should not be surprised if the Duke should wish to continue the connexion even afterwards, for I have often thought that two hours' letter-writing, which is his Grace's daily allowance, is rather worse than the duty of a Clerk of Session, because there is no vacation. Much of this might surely be saved by an intelligent friend on whose style of expression, prudence, and secrecy his Grace could put perfect reliance. Two words marked on any letter by his own hand, would enable such a person to refuse more or less positively—to grant directly or conditionally—or, in short, to maintain the exterior forms of the very troublesome and extensive correspondence which his Grace's high situation entails upon him. I think it is Mons. Le Duc de Saint Simon who tells us of one of Louis XIV.'s ministers *qu'l avoit la plume*—which he explains, by saying, it was his duty to imitate the King's handwriting so closely, as to be almost undistinguishable, and make him on all occasions *parler très noblement.* I wonder how the Duke gets on without such a friend. In the mean time, however, I am glad I can assure him of Ferguson's willing and ready assistance while abroad; and I am happy to find still farther that he had got that assurance before they sailed, for tedious hours occur on board of ship, when it will serve as a relief to talk over any of the private affairs which the Duke wishes to intrust to him.

"I have been very unwell from a visitation of my old enemy the cramp in my stomach, which much resembles, as I conceive, the process by which *the diel* would make one's *king's-hood* into a *spleuchan*,* according to the anathema of Burns. Unfortunately, the opiates which the medical people think indispensable to relieve spasms, bring on a habit of body which has to be counteracted by medicines of a different tendency, so as to produce a most disagreeable see-saw—a kind of pull-devil, pull-baker contention, the field of battle being my unfortunate *præcordia.* Or, to say truth, it reminds me of a certain Indian king I have read of in an old voyage, to whom the captain of an European ship generously presented a lock and key, with which the sable potentate was so much delighted, that to the great neglect, both of his household duties and his affairs of state, he spent a whole month in the repeated operation of locking and unlocking his back-door. I am better to-day, and I trust shall be able to dispense with these alternations, which are much less agreeable in my case than in that of the Sachem aforesaid; and I still hope to be in London in April.

---

* *King's-hood*—"The second of the four stomachs of ruminating animals." JAMIESON.—*Spleuchan*—The Gaelic name of the Highlander's tobacco-pouch.

"I will write to the Duke regularly, for distance of place acts in a contrary ratio on the mind and on the eye: trifles, instead of being diminished, as in prospect, become important and interesting, and therefore he shall have a budget of them. Hogg is here busy with his Jacobite songs. I wish he may get handsomely through, for he is profoundly ignorant of history, and it is an awkward thing to read in order that you may write.* I give him all the help I can, but he sometimes poses me. For instance he came yesterday, open mouth, enquiring what great dignified clergyman had distinguished himself at Killiecrankie—not exactly the scene where one would have expected a churchman to shine—and I found with some difficulty, that he had mistaken Major-General Canon, called, in Kennedy's Latin song, *Canonicus Gallovidiensis*, for the canon of a cathedral. *Ex ungue leonem*. Ever, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

Before this letter reached Lord Montagu, his brother had sailed for Lisbon. The Duke of Wellington had placed his house in that capital (the Palace *das Necessidades*) at the Duke of Buccleuch's disposal; and in the affectionate care and cheerful society of Captain Ferguson, the invalid had every additional source of comfort that his friends could have wished for him. But the malady had gone too far to be arrested by a change of climate; and the letter which he had addressed to Scott, when about to embark at Portsmouth, is endorsed with these words—"*The last I ever received from my dear friend the Duke of Buccleuch.—Alas! alas!*" The principal object of this letter was to remind Scott of his promise to sit to Raeburn for a portrait, to be hung up in that favourite residence where the Duke had enjoyed most of his society. "My prodigious undertaking," writes his Grace, "of a west wing at Bowhill, is begun. A library of forty-one feet by twenty-one, is to be added to the present drawing-room. A space for one picture is reserved over the fire-place, and in this warm situation I intend to place the Guardian of Literature. I should be happy to have my friend Maida appear. It is now almost proverbial, 'Walter Scott and his Dog.' Raeburn should be warned that I am as well acquainted with my friend's hands and arms as with his nose—and Vandyke was of my opinion. Many of R.'s works are shamefully finished—the face studied, but every thing else neglected. This is a fair opportunity of producing something really worthy of his skill."

---

* "I am sure I produced two volumes of Jacobite Relics, such as no man in Scotland or England could have produced but myself." So says Hogg, *ipse*—see his *Autobiography*, 1832, p. 88. I never saw the Shepherd so elated as he was on the appearance of a very severe article on this book in the Edinburgh Review; for, to his exquisite delight, the hostile critic selected for *exceptive* encomium one "old Jacobite strain," viz. "Donald M'Gillavry," which Hogg had fabricated the year before. Scott, too, enjoyed this joke almost as much as the Shepherd.

I shall insert by and by Scott's answer—which never reached the Duke's hand—with another letter of the same date to Captain Ferguson; but I must first introduce one, addressed a fortnight earlier to Mr Southey, who had been distressed by the accounts he received of Scott's health from an American traveller, Mr George Ticknor of Boston—a friend, and worthy to be such, of Mr Washington Irving. The Poet Laureate, by the way, had adverted also to an impudent trick of a London bookseller, who shortly before this time announced certain volumes of Grub Street manufacture, as "A New Series of the Tales of my Landlord," and who, when John Ballantyne, as the "agent for the Author of Waverley," published a declaration that the volumes thus advertised were not from that writer's pen, met John's declaration by an audacious rejoinder—impeaching his authority, and asserting that nothing, but the personal appearance in the field of the gentleman for whom Ballantyne pretended to act, could shake his belief that he was himself in the confidence of the true Simon Pure. This affair gave considerable uneasiness at the time, and for a moment the dropping of Scott's mask seems to have been pronounced advisable by both Ballantyne and Constable. But he was not to be worked upon by such means as these. He calmly replied, "The author who lends himself to such a trick must be a blockhead—let them publish, and that will serve our purpose better than any thing we ourselves could do." I have forgotten the names of the "tales," which, being published accordingly, fell stillborn from the press. Mr Southey had likewise dropped some allusions to another newspaper story of Scott's being seriously engaged in a dramatic work; a rumour which probably originated in the assistance he had lent to Terry in some of the recent highly popular adaptations of his novels to the purposes of the stage; though it is not impossible that some hint of the *Devorgoil* matter may have transpired. "It is reported," said the Laureate, "that you are about to bring forth a play, and I am greatly in hopes it may be true; for I am verily persuaded that in this course you might run as brilliant a career as you have already done in narrative—both in prose and rhyme;—for as for believing that you have a double in the field—not I! Those same powers would be equally certain of success in the drama, and were you to give them a dramatic direction, and reign for a third seven years upon the stage, you would stand alone in literary history. Indeed already I believe that no man ever afforded so much delight to so great a number of his contemporaries in this or in any other country. God bless you, my dear Scott, and believe me ever yours affectionately, R. S." Mr Southey's letter had further announced his wife's safe delivery of a son; the approach of the conclusion of his History of Brazil; and his undertaking of the Life of Wesley.

To Robert Southey, Esq. Keswick, Cumberland.

"Abbotsford, 4th April, 1819.

"My dear Southey,

"Tidings from you must be always acceptable, even were the bowl in the act of breaking at the fountain—and my health is at present very *totterish.* I have gone through a cruel succession of spasms and sickness, which have terminated in a special fit of the jaundice, so that I might sit for the image of Plutus, the god of specie, so far as complexion goes. I shall like our American acquaintance the better that he has sharpened your remembrance of me, but he is also a wondrous fellow for romantic lore and antiquarian research, considering his country. I have now seen four or five well-lettered Americans, ardent in pursuit of knowledge, and free from the ignorance and forward presumption which distinguish many of their countrymen. I hope they will inoculate their country with a love of letters, so nearly allied to a desire of peace and a sense of public justice, virtues to which the great Transatlantic community is more strange than could be wished. Accept my best and most sincere wishes for the health and strength of your latest pledge of affection. When I think what you have already suffered, I can imagine with what mixture of feelings this event must necessarily affect you; but you need not to be told that we are in better guidance than our own. I trust in God this late blessing will be permanent, and inherit your talents and virtues. When I look around me, and see how many men seem to make it their pride to misuse high qualifications, can I be less interested than I truly am, in the fate of one who has uniformly dedicated his splendid powers to maintaining the best interests of humanity? I am very angry at the time you are to be in London, as I must be there in about a fortnight, or so soon as I can shake off this depressing complaint, and it would add not a little that I should meet you there. My chief purpose is to put my eldest son into the army. I could have wished he had chosen another profession, but have no title to combat a choice which would have been my own had my lameness permitted. Walter has apparently the dispositions and habits fitted for the military profession, a very quiet and steady temper, an attachment to mathematics and their application, good sense and uncommon personal strength and activity, with address in most exercises, particularly horsemanship.

"— I had written thus far last week when I was interrupted, first by the arrival of our friend Ticknor with Mr Cogswell, another well-accomplished Yankee—(by the by, we have them of all sorts, *e.g.* one Mr *********, rather a fine man, whom the girls have christened, with some humour, the Yankee Doodle *Dandie.*) They have had Tom Drum's entertainment, for I have been seized with one or two successive *crises* of my cruel malady, lasting in the utmost anguish from eight to ten hours. If I had not the strength of a team of horses I could never have fought through it, and through the heavy fire of medical artillery, scarce less exhausting—for bleeding, blistering, calomel, and ipecacuanha have gone on without intermission—while, during the agony of the spasms, laudanum became necessary in the most liberal doses, though inconsistent with the general treatment. I did not lose my senses, because I resolved to keep them, but I thought once or twice they would have gone overboard, top and top-gallant. I should be a great fool, and a most ungrateful wretch, to complain of such inflictions as these. My life has been, in all its private and public relations, as fortunate perhaps as was ever lived, up to this period; and whether pain or misfortune may lie behind the dark curtain of futurity, I am already a sufficient debtor to the bounty of Providence to be resigned to it. Fear is an evil that has never mixed with my nature, nor has even unwonted good fortune rendered my love of life tenacious; and so I can look forward to the possible conclusion of these scenes of agony with reasonable equanimity, and suffer chiefly through the sympathetic distress of my family.

—— "Other ten days have passed away, for I would not send this Jeremiad to teaze you, while its termination seemed doubtful. For the present,

'The game is done—I've won, I've won,
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.' *

I am this day, for the first time, free from the relics of my disorder, and, except in point of weakness, perfectly well. But no broken-down hunter had ever so many sprung sinews, whelks, and bruises. I am like Sancho after the doughty affair of the Yanguesian Carriers, and all through the unnatural twisting of the muscles under the influence of that *Goule* the cramp. I must be swathed in Goulard and Rosemary spirits—*probatum est.*

---

* These lines are from Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*.

"I shall not fine and renew a lease of popularity upon the theatre. To write for low, ill-informed, and conceited actors, whom you must please, for your success is necessarily at their mercy, I cannot away with. How would you, or how do you think I should, relish being the object of such a letter as Kean* wrote t'other day to a poor author, who, though a pedantic blockhead, had at least the right to be treated like a gentleman by a copper-laced, twopenny tear-mouth, rendered mad by conceit and success? Besides, if this objection were out of the way, I do not think the character of the audience in London is such that one could have the least pleasure in pleasing them. One half come to prosecute their debaucheries so openly, that it would degrade a bagnio. Another set to snooze off their beef-steaks and port wine; a third are critics of the fourth column of the newspaper; fashion, wit, or literature there is not; and, on the whole, I would far rather write verses for mine honest friend Punch and his audience. The only thing that could tempt me to be so silly, would be to assist a friend in such a degrading task who was to have the whole profit and shame of it.

" Have you seen decidedly the most full and methodized collection of Spanish romances (ballads) published by the industry of Depping (Altenburgh, and Leipsic), 1817? It is quite delightful. Ticknor had set me agog to see it, without affording me any hope it could be had in

---

* The reader will find something about this actor's quarrel with Mr Bucke, author of " The Italians," in Barry Cornwall's *Life of Kean*, Vol. ii., p. 178.

London, when by one of these fortunate chances which have often marked my life, a friend, who had been lately on the Continent, came unexpectedly to enquire for me, and plucked it forth *par manière de cadeau.* God prosper you, my dear Southey, in your labours; but do not work too hard—*experto crede.* This conclusion, as well as the confusion of my letter, like the Bishop of Grenada's sermon, savours of the apoplexy. My most respectful compliments attend Mrs S. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S. I shall long to see the conclusion of the Brazil history, which, as the interest comes nearer, must rise even above the last noble volume. Wesley you alone can touch; but will you not have the hive about you? When I was about twelve years old, I heard him preach more than once, standing on a chair, in Kelso churchyard. He was a most venerable figure, but his sermons were vastly too colloquial for the taste of Saunders. He told many excellent stories. One I remember, which he said had happened to him at Edinburgh. 'A drunken dragoon (said Wesley) was commencing an assertion in military fashion, G—d eternally d——n me, just as I was passing. I touched the poor man on the shoulder, and when he turned round fiercely, said calmly, you mean *God bless you.*' In the mode of telling the story he failed not to make us sensible how much his patriarchal appearance, and mild yet bold rebuke, overawed the soldier, who touched his hat, thanked him, and, I think, came to chapel that evening."

To Robert Shortreed, Esq., Sheriff Substitute, &c., Jedburgh.

"Abbotsford, 13th April, 1819.

"Dear Bob,

"I am very desirous to procure, and as soon as possible, Mrs Shortreed's excellent receipt for making yeast. The Duke of Buccleuch complains extremely of the sour yeast at Lisbon as disagreeing with his stomach, and I never tasted half such good bread as Mrs Shortreed has baked at home. I am sure you will be as anxious as I am that the receipt should be forwarded to his Grace as soon as possible. I remember Mrs Shortreed giving a most distinct account of the whole affair. It should be copied over in a very distinct hand, lest Mons. Florence makes blunders.

"I am recovering from my late indisposition, but as weak as water. To write these lines is a fatigue. I scarce think I can be at the circuit at all—certainly only for an hour or two. So on this occasion I will give Mrs Shortreed's kind hospitality a little breathing time. I am tired even with writing these few lines. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT."*

To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., Lisbon.

"Abbotsford, 15th April, 1819.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"How very strange it seems that this should be the first letter I address your Grace, and you so long absent from Scotland, and looking for all the news and nonsense of which I am in general such a faithful reporter. Alas! I have been ill—very—very ill—only Dr Baillie says there is nothing of consequence about my malady *except the pain*—a pretty exception—said pain being intense enough to keep me roaring as loud as your Grace's ci-devant John of Lorn, and of, generally speaking, from six to eight hours' incessant duration, only varied by intervals of deadly sickness. Poor Sophia was alone with me for some time, and managed a half distracted pack of servants with spirit, and sense, and presence of mind, far beyond her years, never suffering her terror at seeing me in a state so new to her and so alarming to divert her mind an instant from what was fit and proper to be done. Pardon this side compliment to your Grace's little Jacobite, to whom you have always been so kind. If sympathy could have cured me, I should not have been long ill. Gentle and simple were all equally kind, and even old Tom Watson crept down from Falshope to see how I was coming on, and to ejaculate 'if any thing ailed the Shirra, it would be sair on the Duke.' The only unwelcome resurrection was that of old * * *, whose feud with me (or rather dryness) I had well hoped was immortal; but he came jinking over the moor with daughters and ponies, and God knows what, to look after my precious health. I cannot tolerate that man; it seems to me as if I hated him for things not only past and present, but for some future offence which is as yet in the womb of fate.

---

* "Sir Walter got not only the recipe for making bread from us—but likewise learnt the best mode of cutting it 'in a family way.' The bread-board and large knife used at Abbotsford at breakfast-time, were adopted by Sir Walter, after seeing them 'work well' in our family."—*Note by Mr Andrew Shortrede.*

"I have had as many remedies sent me for cramp and jaundice as would set up a quack doctor—three from Mrs Plummer, each better than the other—one at least from every gardener in the neighbourhood—besides all sort of recommendations to go to Cheltenham, to Harrowgate, to Jericho for aught I know. Now if there is one thing I detest more than another, it is a watering-place, unless a very pleasant party be previously formed, when, as Tony Lumpkin says, 'a gentleman may be in a concatenation.' The most extraordinary recipe was that of my Highland piper, John

Bruce, who spent a whole Sunday in selecting twelve stones from twelve *south-running* streams, with the purpose that I should sleep upon them, and be whole. I caused him to be told that the recipe was infallible, but that it was absolutely necessary to success that the stones should be wrapt up in the petticoat of a widow who had never wished to marry again, upon which the piper renounced all hope of completing the charm. I had need of a softer couch than Bruce had destined me, for so general was the tension of the nerves all over the body, although the pain of the spasms in the stomach did not suffer the others to be felt, that my whole left leg was covered with swelling and inflammation, arising from the unnatural action of the muscles, and I had to be carried about like a child. My right leg escaped better, the muscles there having less irritability, owing to its lame state. Your grace may imagine the energy of pain in the nobler parts, when cramps in the extremities, sufficient to produce such effects, were unnoticed by me during their existence. But enough of so disagreeable a subject.

"Respecting the portrait, I shall be equally proud and happy to sit for it, and hope it may be so executed as to be in some degree worthy of the preferment to which it is destined.* But neither my late golden hue, for I was covered with jaundice, nor my present silver complexion (looking much more like a spectre than a man) will present any idea of my quondam beef-eating physiognomy. I must wait till the *age of brass*, the true juridical bronze of my profession, shall again appear on my frontal. I hesitate a little about Rae burn, unless your Grace is quite determined. He has very much to do; works just now chiefly for cash, poor fellow, as he can have but a few years to make money; and has twice already made a very chowder-headed person of me. I should like much (always with your approbation) to try Allan, who is a man of real genius, and has made one or two glorious portraits, though his predilection is to the historical branch of the art. We did rather a handsome thing for him, considering that in Edinburgh we are neither very wealthy nor great amateurs. A hundred persons subscribed ten guineas a-piece to raffle* for his fine picture of the Circassian Chief selling slaves to the Turkish Pacha—a beautiful and highly poetical picture. There was another small picture added by way of second prize, and, what is curious enough, the only two peers on the list, Lord Wemyss and Lord Fife, both got prizes. Allan has made a sketch which I shall take to town with me when I can go, in hopes Lord Stafford, or some other picture-buyer, may fancy it, and order a picture. The subject is the murder of Archbishop Sharp on Magus Moor, prodigiously well treated. The savage ferocity of the assassins, crowding one on another to strike at the old prelate on his knees—contrasted with the old man's figure—and that of his daughter endeavouring to interpose for his protection, and withheld by a ruffian of milder mood than his fellows:—the dogged fanatical severity of Rathillet's countenance, who remained on horseback witnessing, with stern fanaticism, the murder he did not choose to be active in, lest it should be said that he struck out of private revenge—are all amazingly well combined in the sketch. I question if the artist can bring them out with equal spirit in the painting which he meditates. Sketches give a sort of fire to the imagination of the spectator, who is apt to fancy a great deal more for himself than the pencil, in the finished picture, can possibly present to his eye afterwards. Constable has offered Allan three hundred pounds to make sketches for an edition of the Tales of My Landlord, and other novels of that cycle, and says he will give him the same sum next year, so, from being pinched enough, this very deserving artist suddenly finds himself at his ease. He was long at Odessa with the Duke of Richelieu, and is a very entertaining person.

---

* The position in the Library at Bowhill, originally destined by the late Duke of Buccleuch for a portrait that never was executed, is now filled by that which Raeburn painted in 1808 for Constable, and which has been engraved for the first volume of this work.

---

* Three pictures were ultimately raffled for; and the following note, dated April the 1st, 1819, shows how keenly and practically Scott, almost in the crisis of his malady, could attend to the details of such a business:—

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

. . . . " I have been dreadfully ill since I wrote to you, but I think I have now got the turn fairly. It was quite time, for though the doctors say the disease is not dangerous, yet I could not have endured six days more agony. I have a summons from the ingenious Mr David Bridges to attend to my interests at his shop next Saturday, or send some qualified person to act on my behalf. I suppose this mysterious missive alludes to the plan about Allan's pictures, and at any rate I hope you will act for me. I should think a raffle with dice would give more general satisfaction than a lottery. You would be astonished what unhandsome suspicions well educated and sensible persons will take into their heads, when a selfish competition awakens the mean and evil passions of our nature. Let each subscriber throw the dice in person or by proxy, leaving out all who throw under a certain number, and let this be repeated till the number is so far reduced that the three who throw highest may hold the prizes. I have much to say to you, and should you spare me a day about the end of next week, I trust you will find me pretty *bobbish*. Always yours affectionately,

W. S.

The Mr David Bridges here mentioned has occurred already.—

" I saw with great pleasure Wilkie's sketch of your

See *ante*, p. 172. The jokers in Blackwood made him happy, by dubbing him " The Director-General of the Fine Arts for Scotland."

Grace, and I think when I get to town I shall coax him out of a copy, to me invaluable. I hope, however, when you return, you will sit to Lawrence. We should have at least one picture of your Grace from the real good hand. Sooth to speak, I cannot say much for the juvenile representations at Bowhill and in the library at Dalkeith. Return, however, with the original features in good health, and we shall not worry you about portraits. The library at Bowhill will be a delightful room, and will be some consolation to me who must, I fear, lose for some time the comforts of the eating-room, and substitute panada and toast and water for the bonny haunch and buxom bottle of claret. Truth is, I must make great restrictions on my creature-comforts, at least till my stomach recovers its tone and ostrich-like capacity of digestion. Our spring here is slow, but not unfavourable: the country looking very well, and my plantings for the season quite completed. I have planted quite up two little glens, leading from the Aid-de-Camp's habitation up to the little loch, and expect the blessings of posterity for the shade and shelter I shall leave where, God knows, I found none.

" It is doomed this letter is not to close without a request. I conclude your Grace has already heard from fifty applicants that the kirk of Middlebie is vacant, and I come forward as the fifty-first (always barring prior engagements and better claims) in behalf of George Thomson, a son of the minister of Melrose, being the grinder of my boys, and therefore deeply entitled to my gratitude and my good offices, as far as they can go. He is nearer Parson Abraham Adams than any living creature I ever saw—very learned, very religious, very simple, and extremely absent. His father, till very lately, had but a sort of half stipend, during the incumbency of a certain notorious Mr MacLagan, to whom he acted only as assistant. The poor devil was brought to the grindstone (having had the want of precaution to beget a large family), and became the very figure of a fellow who used to come upon the stage to sing, 'Let us all be unhappy together.' This poor lad George was his saving angel, not only educating himself, but taking on him the education of two of his brothers, and maintaining them out of his own scanty pittance. He is a sensible lad, and by no means a bad preacher, a staunch Anti-Gallican, and orthodox in his principles. Should your Grace find yourself at liberty to give countenance to this very innocent and deserving creature, I need not say it will add to the many favours you have conferred on me, but I hope the parishioners will have also occasion to say, 'Weel bobbit, George of Middlebie.' Your Grace's Aide-de-camp, who knows young Thomson well, will give you a better idea of him than I can do. He lost a leg by an accident in his boyhood, which spoiled as bold and fine looking a grenadier as ever charged bayonet against a Frenchman's throat. I think your Grace will not like him the worse for having a spice of military and loyal spirit about him. If you knew the poor fellow, your Grace would take uncommon interest in him, were it but for the odd mixture of sense and simplicity, and spirit and good morals. Somewhat too much of him.

"I conclude you will go to Mafra, Cintra, or some of these places, which Baretti describes so delightfully, to avoid the great heats, when the Palace de las Necessidades must become rather oppressive. By the by, though it were only for the credit of the name, I am happy to learn it has that useful English comfort, a water closet. I suppose the armourer of the Liffey has already put it in complete repair. Your Grace sees the most secret passages respecting great men cannot be hidden from their friends. There is but little news here but death in the clan. Harden's sister is dead—a cruel blow to Lady Die,[*] who is upwards of eighty-five, and accustomed to no other society. Again, Mrs Frank Scott, his uncle's widow, is dead, unable to survive the loss of two fine young men in India, her sons, whose death closely followed each other. All this is sad work; but it is a wicked and melancholy world we live in. God bless you, my dear, dear Lord. Take great care of your health, for the sake of all of us. You are the breath of our nostrils, useful to thousands, and to many of these thousands indispensable. I will write again very soon, when I can keep my breast longer to the desk without pain, for I am not yet without frequent relapses, when they souse me into scalding water without a moment's delay, where I lie, as my old *grieve* Tom Purdie said last night, being called to assist at the operation, ' like a *haulded saumon.*' I write a few lines to the Aide-de-Camp, but I am afraid of putting this letter beyond the bounds of Lord Montagu's frank. When I can do any thing for your Grace here, you know I am most pleased and happy. Ever respectfully and affectionately your Grace's

WALTER SCOTT."

To Captain Adam Ferguson, &c. &c. &c.

"Abbotsford, April 16, 1819.

"My dear Adam,

"Having only been able last night to finish a long letter to the Chief, I now add a few lines for the Aide-de-Camp. I have had the pleasure to hear of you regularly from Jack,[†] who is very regular in steering this way when packets arrive ; and I observe with great satisfaction that you think our good Duke's health is on the mending hand. Climate must operate as an alterative, and much cannot perhaps be expected from it at first.—Besides, the great heat must be a serious drawback. But I hope you will try by and by to get away to Cintra, or some of those sequestered retreats where there are shades and cascades to cool the air. I have an idea the country there is eminently beautiful. I am afraid the Duke has not yet been able to visit Torres Vedras, but *you* must be meeting with things every where to put you in mind of former scenes. As for the Senhoras, I have little doubt that the difference betwixt your military hard fare and Florence's high sauces and jellies will make them think that time has rather improved an old friend than otherwise. Apropos of these ticklish subjects. I am a suitor to the Duke, with little expectation of success (for I know his engagements) for the kirk of Middlebie to George Thomson, the very Abraham Adams of Presbytery. If the Duke mentions him to you (not otherwise) pray lend him a lift. With a kirk and a manse the poor fellow might get a good farmer's daughter, and beget grenadiers for his Majesty's service. But as I said before, I daresay all St Hubert's black pack are in full cry upon the living, and that he has little or no chance. It is something, however, to have tabled him, as better may come of it another day.

---

[*] See *ante*, vol. i., p. 248.

[†] Captain John Ferguson, R.N.

" All at Huntly Burn well and hearty, and most kind in their attentions during our late turmoils. Bauby* came over to offer her services as sick-nurse, and I have drunk scarce any thing but delicious ginger beer of Miss Bell's brewing, since my troubles commenced. They have been, to say the least, damnable; and I think you would hardly know me. When I crawl out on Sybil Grey, I am the very image of Death on the pale horse, lanthorn-jawed, decayed in flesh, stooping as if I meant to eat the poney's ears, and unable to go above a footpace. But although I have had, and must expect, frequent relapses, yet the attacks are more slight, and I trust I shall mend with the good weather. Spring sets in very pleasantly and in a settled fashion. I have planted a number of shrubs, &c. at Huntly Burn, and am snodding up the drive of the old farm house, enclosing the Toftfield, and making a good road from the parish road to your gate. This I tell you to animate you to pick up a few seeds both of forest trees, shrubs, and vegetables; we will rear them in the hot-house, and divide honourably. *Avis au lecteur*. I have been a good deal intrusted to the care of Sophia, who is an admirable sick-nurse. Mamma has been called to town by two important avocations, to get a cook—no joking matter—and to see Charles, who was but indifferent, but has recovered. You must have heard of the death of Joseph Hume, David's only son. Christ! what a calamity—just entering life with the fairest prospects—full of talent, and the heir of an old and considerable family—a fine career before him. All this he was one day, or rather one hour—or rather in the course of five minutes—so sudden was the death—and then a heap of earth. His disease is unknown; something about the heart, I believe; but it had no alarming appearance, nothing worse than a cold and sore throat, when convulsions came, and death ensued. It is a complete smash to poor David, who had just begun to hold his head up after his wife's death. But he bears it stoutly, and goes about his business as usual. A woful case. London is now out of the question with me; I have no prospect of being now able to stand the journey by sea or land; but the best is, I have no pressing business there. The Commie* takes charge of Walter's matters —cannot, you know, be in better hands; and Lord Melville talks of gazetting *quam primum.* I will write a long letter very soon, but my back, fingers, and eyes ache with these three pages. All here send love and fraternity. Yours ever most truly,

---

* Bauby—*i.e.* Barbara, was a kind old housekeeper of the Miss Fergusons.

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—By the by, old Kennedy, the tinker, swam for his life at Jedburgh, and was only, by the sophisticated and timid evidence of a seceding doctor, who differed from all his brethren, saved from a well-deserved gibbet. He goes to botanize for fourteen years. Pray tell this to the Duke, for he was

'An old soldier of the Duke's,
And the Duke's old soldier.'

Six of his brethren, I am told, were in court, and kith and kin without end. I am sorry so many of the clan are left. The cause of quarrel with the murdered man was an old feud between two gipsey clans, the Kennedies and Irvings, which, about forty years since, gave rise to a desperate quarrel and battle on Hawick Green, in which the grandfathers of both Kennedy, and Irving whom he murdered, were engaged."

In the next of these letters there is allusion to a drama on the story of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, of which Mr Terry had transmitted the MS. to Abbotsford—and which ultimately proved very successful. Terry had, shortly before this time, become the acting manager of the Haymarket theatre.

---

* The Lord Chief Commissioner Adam.

To D. Terry, Esq. Haymarket, London.

"Abbotsford, 18th April, 1819.

"Dear Terry,

"I am able (though very weak) to answer your kind enquiries. I have thought of you often, and been on the point of writing or dictating a letter, but till very lately I could have had little to tell you of but distress and agony, with constant relapses into my unhappy malady, so that for weeks I seemed to lose rather than gain ground, all food nauseating on my stomach, and my clothes hanging about me like a potato-bogle,* with from five or six to ten hours of mortal pain every third day; latterly the fits have been much milder, and have at last given way to the hot bath without any use of opiates; an immense point gained, as they hurt my general health extremely. Conceive my having taken, in the course of six or seven hours, six grains of opium, three of hyoscyamus, near 200 drops of laudanum, and all without any sensible relief of the agony under which I laboured. My stomach is now getting confirmed, and I have great hopes the bout is over; it has been a dreadful set-to. I am sorry to hear Mrs Terry is complaining; you ought not to let her labour, neither at Abbotsford sketches nor at any thing else, but study to keep her mind amused as much as possible. As for Walter, he is a shoot of an *Aik*,† and I have no fear of him; I hope he remembers Abbotsford and his soldier namesake.

"I send the MS.—I wish you had written for it earlier. My touching or even thinking of it was out of the question; my corrections would have smelled as cruelly of the cramp, as the Bishop of Grenada's homily‡ did of the apoplexy. Indeed I hold myself inadequate to estimate those criticisms which rest on stage effect, having been of late very little of a play-going person. Would to Heaven these sheets could do for you what Rob Roy has done for Murray; he has absolutely netted upwards of L.3000: to be sure the man who played the Bailie made a piece of acting equal to whatever has been seen in the profession. For my own part, I was actually electrified by the truth, spirit, and humour which he threw into the part. It was the living Nicol Jarvie: conceited, pragmatical, cautious, generous, proud of his connexion with Rob Roy, frightened for him at the same time, and yet extremely desirous to interfere with him as an adviser: The tone in which he seemed to give him up for a lost man after having provoked him into some burst of Highland violence—'Ah Rab, Rab!' was quite inimitable. I do assure you I never saw a thing better played. It is like it may be his only part, for no doubt the Patavinity and knowledge of the provincial character may have aided him much; but still he must be a wonderful fellow; and the houses he drew were tremendous.

---

* Anglice—Scarecrow. † Ditto—an Oak. ‡ Sermon—p. 241.

"I am truly glad you are settled in London—a 'rolling stone'—the proverb is something musty: it is always difficult to begin a new profession; I could have wished you quartered nearer us, but we shall always hear of you. The becoming stage-manager at the Haymarket, I look upon as a great step; well executed, it cannot but lead to something of the same kind elsewhere. You must be aware of stumbling over a propensity which easily besets you from the habit of not having your time fully employed—I mean what the women very expressively call *dawdling*. Your motto must be *Hoc age*. Do instantly whatever is to be done, and take the hours of reflection or recreation after business, and never before it. When a regiment is under march, the rear is often thrown into confusion because the front do not move steadily and without interruption. It is the same thing with business. If that which is first in hand is not instantly, steadily, and regularly despatched, other things accumulate behind till affairs begin to press all at once, and no human brain can stand the confusion ; pray mind this—it is one of your few weak points—ask Mrs Terry else. A habit of the mind it is which is very apt to beset men of intellect and talent, especially when their time is not regularly filled up, but left at their own arrangement. But it is like the ivy round the oak, and ends by limiting, if it does not destroy, the power of manly and necessary exertion. I must love a man so well to whom I offer such a word of advice, that I will not apologize for it, but expect to hear you are become as regular as a Dutch clock—hours, quarters, minutes, all marked and appropriated. This is a great cast in life, and must be played with all skill and caution.

" We wish much to have a plan of the great bed, that we may hang up the tester. Mr Atkinson offered to have it altered or exchanged; but with the expense of land-carriage and risk of damage, it is not to be thought of. I enclose a letter to thank him for all his kindness. I should like to have the invoice when the things are shipped. I hope they will send them to Leith and not to Berwick. The plasterer has broke a pane in the armoury. I enclose a sheet with the size, the black lines being traced within the lead, and I add a rough drawing of the arms, which are those of my mother. I should like it replaced as soon as possible, for I will set the expense against the careless rascal's account.

" I have got a beautiful scarlet paper inlaid with gold (rather crimson than scarlet) in a present from India, which will hang the parlour to a T: But we shall want some articles from town to enable us to take possession of the parlour—namely, a *carpet*—you mentioned a *wainscot pattern*, which would be delightful—item *grates* for said parlour and armoury—a plain and unexpensive pattern, resembling that in my room (which vents most admirably), and suited by half-dogs for burning wood. The sideboard and chairs you have mentioned. I see Mr Bullock (George's brother) advertises his museum for sale. I wonder if a good set of *real tilting* armour could be got cheap there. James Ballantyne got me one very handsome bright steel cuirassier of Queen Elizabeth's time, and two less perfect for L.20—dog cheap; they make a great figure in the armoury. Hangings, curtains, &c. I believe we shall get as well in Edinburgh as in London; it is in your joiner and cabinet work that your infinite superiority lies.

"Write to me if I can do aught about the play—though I fear not: much will depend on Dumbiedykes, in whom Liston will be strong. Sophia has been chiefly my nurse, as an indisposition of little Charles called Charlotte to town. She returned yesterday with him. All beg kind compliments to you and Mrs Terry and little Walter. I remain your very feeble but convalescent to command,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—We must not forget the case for the leaves of the table while out of use; without something of the kind I am afraid they will be liable to injury, which is a pity, as they are so very beautiful."*

The accounts of Scott's condition circulated in Edinburgh in the course of this April were so alarming that I should not have thought of accepting his invitation to revisit Abbotsford, unless John Ballantyne had given me better tidings, about the end of the month. He informed me that his "illustrious friend" (for so both the Ballantynes usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another. I have now before me a letter of the 8th April, in which Scott says to Constable, "Yesterday I began to dictate, and did it easily and with comfort. This is a great point—but I must proceed by little and little; last night I had a slight return of the enemy—but baffled him;" and he again writes to the bookseller on the 11th,—"John Ballantyne is here, and returns with copy, which my increasing strength permits me to hope I may now furnish regularly."

---

* The Duke of Buccleuch had given Scott some old oak-roots from Drumlanrig, out of which a very beautiful set of dinner-tables had been manufactured by Messrs Bullock.

The *copy* (as MS. for the press is technically called) which Scott was thus dictating, was that of the Bride of Lammermoor; and his amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne; of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen; and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption, and though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a? !—the like o' that!—eh sirs! eh sirs!"—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me that after the first day he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of The Bride of Lammermoor—the whole of the Legend of Montrose—and almost the whole of Ivanhoe. Yet, when his health was fairly re-established, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing every thing with his own hand. When I once, some time afterwards, expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eyesight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered, "I should as soon think of getting into a sedan chair while I can use my legs."

On one of the envelopes in which a chapter of the Bride of Lammermoor reached the printer in the Canongate about this time—(May 2, 1819)—there is this note in the author's own handwriting:—

"Dear James,—These matters will need more than your usual carefulness. Look sharp—double sharp—my trust is constant in thee:—

'Tarry woo, tarry woo,
Tarry woo is ill to spin;

Card it weel, card it weel,
Card it weel ere ye begin.
When 'tis carded, row'd, and spun,
Then the work is hafflins done;
But when woven, drest, and clean,
It may be cleading for a queen.'
So be it.—W. S."

But to return—I rode out to Abbotsford with John Ballantyne towards the end of the spring vacation, and though he had warned me of a sad change in Scott's appearance, it was far beyond what I had been led to anticipate. He had lost a great deal of flesh—his clothes hung loose about him—his countenance was meagre, haggard, and of the deadliest yellow of the jaundice—and his hair, which a few weeks before had been but slightly sprinkled with grey, was now almost literally snow-white. His eye, however, retained its fire unquenched; indeed it seemed to have gained in brilliancy from the new langour of the other features; and he received us with all the usual cordiality, and even with little perceptible diminishment in the sprightliness of his manner. He sat at table while we dined, but partook only of some rice pudding; and after the cloth was drawn, while sipping his toast and water, pushed round the bottles in his old style, and talked with easy cheerfulness of the stout battle he had fought, and which he now seemed to consider as won.

"One day there was," he said, "when I certainly began to have great doubts whether the mischief was not getting at my mind,—and I'll tell you how I tried to reassure myself on that score. I was quite unfit for any thing like original composition; but I thought if I could turn an old German ballad I had been reading into decent rhymes, I might dismiss my worst apprehensions—and you shall see what came of the experiment."

He then desired his daughter Sophia to fetch the MS. of *The Noble Moringer*, as it had been taken down from his dictation, partly by her and partly by Mr Laidlaw, during one long and painful day while he lay in bed. He read it to us as it stood, and seeing that both Ballantyne and I were much pleased with the verses, he said he should copy them over,—make them a little "tighter about the joints,"—and give me them to be printed in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1816, to consult him about which volume had partly been the object of my visit; and this promise he redeemed before I left him.

The reading of this long ballad, however—(it consists of forty-three stanzas)*—seemed to have exhausted him: he retired to his bed-room; and an hour or two after, when we were about to follow his example, his family were distressed by the well-known symptoms of another sharp recurrence of his affliction. A large dose of opium and the hot bath were immediately put in requisition. His good neighbour, Dr Scott of Darnlee, was sent for, and soon attended; and in the course of three or four hours we learned that he was once more at ease. But I can never forget the groans which, during that space, his agony extorted from him. Well knowing the iron strength of his resolution, to find him confessing its extremity, by cries audible not only all over the house, but even to a considerable distance from it—(for Ballantyne and I, after he was put into his bath, walked forth to be out of the way, and heard him distinctly at the bowling-green)—it may be supposed that this was sufficiently alarming, even to my companion; how much more to me, who had never before listened to that voice, except in the gentle accents of kindness and merriment.

I told Ballantyne that I saw this was no time for my visit, and that I should start for Edinburgh again at an early hour—and begged he would make my apologies—in the propriety of which he acquiesced. But as I was dressing, about seven next morning, Scott himself tapped at my door, and entered, looking better I thought than at my arrival the day before. "Don't think of going," said he, "I feel hearty this morning, and if my devil does come back again, it won't be for three days at any rate. For the present, I want nothing to set me up except a good trot in the open air, to drive away the accursed vapours of the laudanum I was obliged to swallow last night. You have never seen Yarrow, and when I have finished a little job I have with Jocund Johnny, we shall all take horse and make a day of it." When I said something about a ride of twenty miles being rather a bold experiment after such a night, he answered, that he had ridden more than forty, a week before, under similar circumstances, and felt nothing the worse. He added that there was an election on foot, in consequence of the death of Sir John Riddell of Riddell, Member of Parliament for the Selkirk district of Burghs, and that the bad health and absence of the Duke of Buccleuch rendered it quite necessary that he should make exertions on this occasion. "In short," said he, laughing, "I have an errand which I shall perform—and as I must pass Newark, you had better not miss the opportunity of seeing it under so excellent a Cicerone as the old minstrel,

---

* See Scott's Poetical Works (Edition, 1834), Vol. vi. p. 343.

'Whose withered cheek and tresses grey
Shall yet see many a better day.' "

About eleven o'clock, accordingly, he was mounted, by the help of Tom Purdie, upon a staunch, active cob yclept *Sybil Grey*,—exactly such a creature as is described in Mr Dinmont's *Dumple*—while Ballantyne sprung into the saddle of noble *Old Mortality*, and we proceeded to the town of Selkirk, where Scott halted to do business at the Sheriff-Clerk's, and begged us to move onward at a gentle pace until he should overtake us. He came up by and by at a canter, and seemed in high glee with the tidings he had heard about the canvass. And so we rode by Philiphaugh, Carterhaugh, Bowhill, and Newark, he pouring out all the way his picturesque anecdotes of former times—more especially of the fatal field where Montrose was finally overthrown by Leslie. He described the battle as vividly as if he had witnessed it; the passing of the Ettrick at daybreak by the Covenanting General's heavy cuirassiers, many of them old soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus, and the wild confusion of the Highland host when exposed to their charge on an extensive *haugh* as flat as a bowling-green. He drew us aside at *Slain-men's-lee*, to observe the green mound that marks the resting-place of the slaughtered royalists; and pointing to the apparently precipitous mountain, Minchmoor, over which Montrose and his few cavaliers escaped, mentioned that, rough as it seemed, his mother remembered passing it in her early days in a coach and six, on her way to a ball at Peebles—several footmen marching on either side of the carriage to prop it up, or drag it through bogs, as the case might require. He also gave us, with all the dramatic effect of one of his best chapters, the history of a worthy family who, inhabiting at the time of the battle a cottage on his own estate, had treated with particular kindness a young officer of Leslie's army quartered on them for a night or two before. When parting from them to join the troops, he took out a purse of gold, and told the goodwoman that he had a presentiment he should not see another sun set, and in that case would wish his money to remain in her kind hands; but, if he should survive, he had no doubt she would restore it honestly. The young man returned mortally wounded, but lingered awhile under her roof, and finally bequeathed to her and hers his purse and his blessing. "Such," he said, "was the origin of the respectable lairds of ———, now my good neighbours."

The prime object of this expedition was to talk over the politics of Selkirk with one of the Duke of Buccleuch's great store-farmers, who, as the Sheriff had learned, possessed private influence with a doubtful bailie or deacon among the Souters. I forget the result, if ever I heard it. But next morning, having, as he assured us, enjoyed a good night in consequence of this ride, he invited us to accompany him on a similar errand across Bowden Moor, and up the Valley of the Ayle; and when we reached a particularly bleak and dreary point of that journey, he informed us that he perceived in the waste below a wreath of smoke, which was the appointed signal that a *wavering* Souter of some consequence had agreed to give him a personal interview where no Whiggish eyes were likely to observe them;—and so, leaving us on the road, he proceeded to thread his way westwards, across moor and bog, until we lost view of him. I think a couple of hours might have passed before he joined us again, which was, as had been arranged, not far from the village of Lilliesleaf. In that place, too, he had some negotiation of the same sort to look after; and when he had finished it, he rode with us all round the ancient woods of Riddell, but would not go near the house; I suppose lest any of the afflicted family might still be there. Many were his lamentations over the catastrophe which had just befallen them. "They are," he said, "one of the most venerable races in the south of Scotland—they were here long before these glens had ever heard the name of Soulis or of Douglas—to say nothing of Buccleuch: they can show a Pope's bull of the tenth century, authorizing the then Riddell to marry a relation within the forbidden degrees. Here they have been for a thousand years at least; and now all the inheritance is to pass away, merely because one good worthy gentleman would not be contented to enjoy his horses, his hounds, and his bottle of claret, like thirty or forty predecessors, but must needs turn scientific agriculturist, take almost all his fair estate into his own hand, superintend for himself perhaps a hundred ploughs, and try every new nostrum that has been tabled by the quackish *improvers* of the time. And what makes the thing ten times more wonderful is, that he kept day-book and ledger, and all the rest of it, as accurately as if he had been a cheesemonger in the Grassmarket." Some of the most remarkable circumstances in Scott's own subsequent life have made me often recall this conversation—with more wonder than he expressed about the ruin of the Riddells.

I remember he told us a world of stories, some tragical, some comical, about the old lairds of this time-honoured lineage; and among others, that of the seven Bibles and the seven bottles of ale, which he afterwards inserted in a note to *The Bride of Lammermoor*.* He was also full of

---

* "It was once the universal custom to place ale, wine, or some strong liquor, in the chamber of an honoured guest, to assuage his thirst should he feel any on awakening in the night, which, considering that the hospitality of that period often reached excess, was by no means unlikely. The author has met some instances of it in former days, and in old-fashioned families. It was, perhaps, no poetic fiction that records how

'My cummer and I lay down to sleep
With two pint stoups at our bed feet;
And aye when we waken'd we drank them dry:
What think you o' my cummer and I?'

"It is a current story in Teviotdale, that in the house of an ancient anecdotes about a friend of his father's, a minister of Lilliesleaf, who reigned for two generations the most popular preacher in Teviotdale; but I forget the orator's name. When the original of Saunders Fairford congratulated him in his latter days on the undiminished authority he still maintained—every kirk in the neighbourhood being left empty when it was known he was to mount the *tent* at any country sacrament—the shrewd divine answered, "Indeed, Mr Walter, I sometimes think it's vera surprising. There's aye a talk of this or that wonderfully gifted young man frae the college; but whenever I'm to be at the same *occasion* with ony o' them, I e'en mount the white horse in the Revelations, and he dings them a'."

Thus Scott amused himself and us as we jogged homewards: and it was the same the following day, when (no

---

family of distinction, much addicted to the Presbyterian cause, a Bible was always put into the sleeping apartment of the guests, along with a bottle of strong ale. On some occasion there was a meeting of clergymen in the vicinity of the castle, all of whom were invited to dinner by the worthy Baronet, and several abode all night. According to the fashion of the times, seven of the reverend guests were allotted to one large barrack-room, which was used on such occasions of extended hospitality. The butler took care that the divines were presented, according to custom, each with a Bible and a bottle of ale. But after a little consultation among themselves, they are said to have recalled the domestic as he was leaving the apartment. 'My friend,' said one of the venerable guests, 'you must know, when we meet together as brethren, the youngest minister reads aloud a portion of Scripture to the rest;—only one Bible, therefore, is necessary; take away the other six, and in their place bring six more bottles of ale.'

"This synod would have suited the 'hermit sage' of Johnson, who answered a pupil who enquired for the real road to happiness, with the celebrated line,

'Come, my lad, and drink some beer!'"

—See *Waverley Novels*, Edit. 1834, Vol. xiv. p. 91.

election matters pressing) he rode with us to the western peak of the Eildon hills, that he might show me the whole panorama of his Teviotdale, and expound the direction of the various passes by which the ancient forayers made their way into England, and tell the names and the histories of many a monastic chapel and baronial peel, now mouldering in glens and dingles that escape the eye of the traveller on the highways. Among other objects on which he descanted with particular interest were the ruins of the earliest residence of the Kerrs of Cessford, so often opposed in arms to his own chieftains of Branksome, and a desolate little kirk on the adjoining moor, where the Dukes of Roxburghe are still buried in the same vault with the hero who fell at Turnagain. Turning to the northward, he showed us the crags and tower of Smailholme, and behind it the shattered fragment of Erceldoune—and repeated some pretty stanzas ascribed to the last of the real wandering minstrels of this district, by name *Burn*:—

"Sing Erceldoune, and Cowdenknowes,
Where Homes had ance commanding,
And Drygrange, wi' the milk-white ewes,
'Twixt Tweed and Leader standing.
The bird that flees through Redpath trees
And Gledswood banks each morrow,
May chaunt and sing—*sweet Leader's haughs*
And *Bonny howms of Yarrow.*

"But Minstrel Burn cannot assuage
His grief, while life endureth,
To see the changes of this age
Which fleeting time procureth;
For mony a place stands in hard case,
Where blythe folks kent nae sorrow,
With Homes that dwelt on Leader side,
And Scotts that dwelt on Yarrow."

That night he had again an attack of his cramp, but not so serious as the former. Next morning he was again at work with Ballantyne at an early hour; and when I parted from him after breakfast, he spoke cheerfully of being soon in Edinburgh for the usual business of his Court. I left him, however, with dark prognostications; and the circumstances of this little visit to Abbotsford have no doubt dwelt on my mind the more distinctly, from my having observed and listened to him throughout under the painful feeling that it might very probably be my last.

On the 5th of May he received the intelligence of the death of the Duke of Buccleuch, which had occurred at Lisbon on the 20th April; and next morning he wrote as follows to his Grace's brother:—

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c., Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Abbotsford, 6th May, 1819.

"My dear Lord,

"I heard from Lord Melville, by yesterday's post, the calamitous news which your Lordship's very kind letter this moment confirmed, had it required confirmation. For this fortnight past my hopes have been very faint indeed, and on Wednesday, when I had occasion to go to Yarrow, and my horse turned from habit to go up the avenue at Bowhill, I felt deeply impressed that it was a road I should seldom travel for a long time at least. To your Lordship, let me add to myself, this is an irreparable loss, for such a fund of excellent sense, high principle, and perfect honour, have been rarely combined in the same individual. To the country the inestimable loss will be soon felt, even by those who were insensible to his merits, or wished to detract from them, when he was amongst us. In my opinion he never recovered his domestic calamity. He wrote to me a few days after that cruel event, a most affectionate and remarkable letter, explaining his own feelings, and while he begged that I would come to him, assuring me that I should find him the same he would be for the future years of his life. He kept his word; but I could see a grief of that calm and concentrated kind which claims the hours of solitude and of night for its empire, and gradually wastes the springs of life.

"Among the thousand painful feelings which this melancholy event had excited, I have sometimes thought of his distance from home. Yet this was done with the best intention, and upon the best advice, and was perhaps the sole chance which remained for re-establishment. It has pleased God that it has failed, but the best means were used under the best direction, and mere mortality can do no more. I am very anxious about the dear young ladies, whose lives were so much devoted to their father, and shall be extremely desirous of knowing how they are. The Duchess has so much firmness of mind, and Lady M. so much affectionate prudence, that they will want no support that example and kindness can afford. To me the world seems a sort of waste without him. We had many joint objects, constant intercourse, and unreserved communication, so that through him and by him I took interest in many things altogether out of my own sphere, and it seems to me as if the horizon were narrowed and lowered around me. But God's will be done: it is all that brother or friend can or dare say. I have reluctance to mention the trash which is going on here. Indeed, I think little is altered since I wrote to your Lordship fully, excepting that last night late, Chisholm* arrived at Abbotsford from Lithgow, recalled by the news which had somehow reached Edinburgh—as I suspect by some officiousness of . . . . . . He left Lithgow in such a state that there is no doubt he will carry that burgh, unless Pringle * gets Selkirk. He is gone off this morning to try the possible and impossible to get the single vote which he wants, or to prevail on one person to stand neuter. It is possible he may succeed, though this event, when it becomes generally known, will be greatly against his efforts. I should care little more about the matter, were it not for young Walter, † and for the despite I feel at the success of speculations which were formed on the probability of the event which has happened. Two sons of ******** came here yesterday, and with their father's philosophical spirit of self-accommodation, established themselves for the night. Betwixt them and Chisholm's noise, my head and my stomach suffered so much (under the necessity of drowning feelings which I could not express), that I had a return of the spasms, and I felt as if a phantasmagoria was going on around me. Quiet, and some indulgence of natural and solitary sorrow, have made me well. To-day I will ride up to Selkirk and see the magistrates, or the chief of them. It is necessary they should not think the cause deserted. If it is thought proper to suspend the works at Bowhill, perhaps the measure may be delayed till the decision of this matter.

---

* Mr Chisholm was the Tory Candidate for the Selkirk burghs.

"I am sure, my dear Lord, you will command me in all I can do. I have only to regret it is so little. But to show that my gratitude has survived my benefactor, would be the pride and delight of my life. I never thought it possible that a man could have loved another so much where the distance of rank was so very great. But why recur to things so painful? I pity poor Adam Ferguson, whose affections were so much engaged by the Duke's kindness, and who has with his gay temper a generous and feeling heart. The election we may lose, but not our own credit, and that of the family—that you may rest assured of. My best respects and warmest sympathy attend the dear young ladies, and Lady Montagu. I shall be anxious to know how the Duchess-Dowager does under this great calamity. The poor boy —what a slippery world is before him, and how early a dangerous, because a splendid, lot, is presented to him! But he has your personal protection. Believe me, with a deep participation in your present distress, your Lordship's most faithfully,

---

* Mr Pringle of Clifton, the Whig candidate.

† Walter Francis, the present Duke of Buccleuch.

WALTER SCOTT."

Scott drew up for Ballantyne's newspaper of that week the brief character of Charles, Duke of Buccleuch, which has since been included in his Prose Miscellanies (Vol. iv.); and the following letter accompanied a copy of it to Ditton Park.

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.

"My dear Lord,

"I send you the newspaper article under a different cover. I have studied so much to suppress my own feelings, and so to give a just, calm, and temperate view of the excellent subject of our present sorrow, such as I conceive might be drawn by one less partially devoted to him, that it has to my own eye a cold and lifeless resemblance of an original so dear to me. But I was writing to the public, and to a public less acquainted with him than a few years' experience would have made them. Even his own tenantry were but just arrived at the true estimation of his character. I wrote, therefore, to insure credit and belief, in a tone greatly under my own feelings. I have ordered twenty-five copies to be put in a different shape, of which I will send your Lordship twenty. It has been a painful task, but I feel it was due from me. I am just favoured with your letter. I beg your Lordship will not write more frequently than you find quite convenient, for you must have now more than enough upon you. The arrangement respecting Boughton* is what I expected—the lifeless remains will be laid where the living thoughts had long been. I grieve that I shall not see the last honours, yet I hardly know how I could have gone through the scene.

"Nothing in the circumstances could have given me the satisfaction which I receive from your Lordship's purpose of visiting Scotland, and bringing down the dear young ladies, who unite so many and such affecting ties upon the regard and affection of every friend of the family. It will be a measure of the highest necessity for the political interest of the family, and your Lordship will have an opportunity of hearing much information of importance, which really could not be made subject of writing. The extinction of fire on the hearths of this great house would be putting out a public light, and a public beacon in the time of darkness and storms. Ever your most faithful W. S."

On the 11th of May Scott returned to Edinburgh, and was present next day at the opening of the Court of Session; when all who saw him were as much struck as I had been at Abbotsford with the lamentable change his illness had produced in his appearance. He was unable to persist in attendance at the Clerk's table—for several weeks afterwards I think he seldom if ever attempted it;—and I well remember that, when the Third Series of the Tales of My Landlord at length came out (which was on the 10th of June), he was known to be confined to bed, and the book was received amidst the deep general impression that we should see no more of that parentage. On the 13th he wrote thus to Captain Ferguson, who had arrived in London with the remains of the Duke of Buccleuch :—

---

* Boughton, in Northamptonshire. This seat came into the possession of Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, by his marriage with the daughter and heiress of John, the last Duke of Montagu, who survived for many years her son Duke Charles. At Boughton, as the reader will see, Scott's early friend, the Duchess Harriet of Buccleuch had been buried in 1814.

To Captain Adam Ferguson, &c. &c. Montagu House, Whitehall.

"My dear Adam, I am sorry to say I have had another eight days' visit of my disorder, which has confined me chiefly to my bed. It is not attended with so much acute pain as in spring, but with much sickness and weakness. It will perhaps shade off into a mild chronic complaint —if it returns frequently with the same violence I shall break up by degrees, and follow my dear Chief. I do not mean that there is the least cause for immediate apprehension, but only that the constitution must be injured at last, as well by the modes of cure, or rather of relief, as by the pain. My digestion as well as my appetite are for the present quite gone—a change from former days of Leith and Newhaven parties. I thank God I can look at this possibility without much anxiety, and without a shadow of fear.

"Will you, if your time serves, undertake two little commissions for me? One respects a kind promise of Lord Montagu to put George Thomson's name on a list for kirk preferment. I don't like to trouble him with letters—he must be overwhelmed with business, and has his dear brother's punctuality in replying even to those which require none. I would fain have that Scottish Abr. Adams provided for if possible. My other request is, that you will, if you can, see Terry, and ask him what is doing about my diningroom chairs, and especially about the carpet, for I shall not without them have the use of what Slender calls 'mine own great parlour' this season. I should write to him, but am really unable. I hope you will soon come down—a sight of you would do me good at the worst turn I have yet had. The Baronet[*] is very kind, and comes and sits by me. Every body likes the Regalia, and I have heard of no one grudging their *hog*[†]—but you must get something better. I have been writing to the Commie [‡] about this. He has been inexpressibly kind in Walter's matter, and the Duke of York has promised an early commission. When you see our friend, you can talk over this, and may perhaps save him the trouble of writing particular directions what further is to be done. Iago's rule, I suppose—'put money in thy purse.' I wish in passing you would ask how the ladies are in Piccadilly. Yours ever,

W. SCOTT."

The Bride of Lammermoor, and the Legend of Montrose, would have been read with indulgence, had they needed it; for the painful circumstances under which they must have been produced were known wherever an English newspaper made its way; but I believe that, except in numerous typical errors, which sprung of necessity from the author's inability to correct any proof-sheets, no one ever affected to perceive in either tale the slightest symptom of his malady. Dugald Dalgetty was placed by acclamation in the same rank with Bailie Jarvie—a conception equally new, just, and humorous, and worked out in all the details, as if it had formed the luxurious entertainment of a chair as easy as was ever shaken by Rabelais; and though the character of Montrose himself seemed hardly to have been treated so fully as the subject merited, the accustomed rapidity of the novelist's execution would have been enough to account for any such defect. Of Caleb Balderstone—(the hero of one of the many ludicrous delineations which he owed to the late Lord Haddington, a man of rare pleasantry, and one of the best tellers of old Scotch stories that I ever heard)—I cannot say that the general opinion was then, nor do believe it ever since has been, very favourable. It was pronounced at the time, by more than one critic, a mere caricature; and, though Scott himself would never in after days admit this censure to be just, he allowed that "he might have sprinkled rather too much parsley over his chicken." But even that blemish, for I grant that I think it a serious one, could not disturb the profound interest and pathos of the Bride of Lammermoor—to my fancy the most pure and powerful of all the tragedies that Scott ever penned. The reader will be well pleased, however, to have, in place of any critical observations on this work, the following particulars of its composition from the notes which its printer dictated when stretched on the bed from which he well knew he was never to rise.

---

[*] Mr William Clerk.

[†] A shilling.

[‡] The Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam.

"The book" (says James Ballantyne), "was not only written, but published, before Mr Scott was able to rise from his bed; and he assured me, that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained! He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood. These remained rooted where they had ever been; or, to speak more explicitly, he remembered the general facts of the existence of the father and mother, of the son and daughter, of the rival lovers, of the compulsory marriage, and the attack made by the bride upon the hapless bridegroom, with the general catastrophe of the whole. All these things he recollected, just as he did before he took to his bed; but he literally recollected nothing else:—not a single character woven by the romancer, not one of the many scenes and points of humour, nor any thing with which he was connected as the writer of the work. 'For a long time,' he said, 'I felt myself very uneasy in the course of my reading, lest I should be startled by meeting something altogether glaring and fantastic. However, I recollected that you had been the printer, and I felt sure that you would not have permitted any thing of this sort to pass.' 'Well,' I said, 'upon the whole, how did you like it?' 'Why,' he said, 'as a whole, I felt it monstrous gross and grotesque; but still the worst of it made me laugh, and I trusted the good-natured public would not be less indulgent.' I do not think I ever ventured to lead to the discussion of this singular phenomenon again; but you may depend upon it, that what I have now said is as distinctly reported as if it had been taken down in short-hand at the moment; I should not otherwise have ventured to allude to the matter at all. I believe you will agree with me in thinking that the history of the human mind contains nothing more wonderful."

Soon after Scott re-appeared in the Parliament-house, he came down one Saturday to the vaulted chambers below, where the Advocates' Library was then kept, to attend a meeting of the Faculty, and as the assembly was breaking up he asked me to walk home with him, taking Ballantyne's printing office in our way. He moved languidly, and said, if he were to stay in town many days, he must send for Sybil Grey; but his conversation was heart-whole; and, in particular, he laughed till, despite his weakness, the stick was flourishing in his hand, over the following almost incredible specimen of that most absurd personage the late Earl of Buchan.

Hearing one morning shortly before this time, that Scott was actually *in extremis*, the Earl proceeded to Castle Street, and found the knocker tied up. He then descended to the door in the area, and was there received by honest Peter Mathieson, whose face seemed to confirm the woful tidings, for in truth his master was ill enough. Peter told his Lordship that he had the strictest orders to admit no visiter; but the Earl would take no denial, pushed the bashful coachman aside, and elbowed his way up stairs to the door of Scott's bed-chamber. He had his fingers upon the handle before Peter could give warning to Miss Scott; and when she appeared to remonstrate against such an intrusion, he patted her on the head like a child, and persisted in his purpose of entering the sick-room so strenuously, that the young lady found it necessary to bid Peter see the Earl down stairs again, at whatever damage to his dignity. Peter accordingly, after trying all his eloquence in vain, gave the tottering, bustling, old, meddlesome coxcomb a single shove,—as respectful, doubt not, as a shove can ever be,—and he accepted that hint, and made a rapid exit. Scott, mean while, had heard the confusion, and at length it was explained to him; when, fearing that Peter's gripe might have injured Lord Buchan's feeble person, he desired James Ballantyne, who had been sitting by his bed, to follow the old man home—make him comprehend, if he could, that the family were in such bewilderment of alarm, that the ordinary rules of civility were out of the question—and, in fine, enquire what had been the object of his lordship's intended visit. James proceeded forthwith to the Earl's house in George Street, and found him strutting about his library in a towering indignation. Ballantyne's elaborate demonstrations of respect, however, by degrees softened him, and he condescended to explain himself. "I wished," said he, "to embrace Walter Scott before he died, and inform him that I had long considered it as a satisfactory circumstance that he and I were destined to rest together in the same place of sepulture. The principal thing, however, was to relieve his mind as to the arrangements of his funeral—to show him a plan which I had prepared for the procession—and, in a word, to assure him that I took upon myself the whole conduct of the ceremonial at Dryburgh." He then exhibited to Ballantyne a formal programme, in which, as may be supposed, the predominant feature was not Walter Scott, but David Earl of Buchan. It had been settled, *inter alia*, that the said Earl was to pronounce an eulogium over the grave, after the fashion of French Academicians in the *Père la Chaise*.

And this silliest and vainest of busy-bodies was the elder brother of Thomas and Henry Erskine! But the story is well known of his boasting one day to the late Duchess of Gordon of the extraordinary talents of his family—when her unscrupulous grace asked him, very coolly, whether the wit had not come by the mother, and been all settled on the younger branches?

Scott, as his letters to be quoted presently will show, had several more attacks of his disorder, and some very severe ones, during the autumn of 1819; nor, indeed, had it quite disappeared until about Christmas. But from the time of his return to Abbotsford in July, when he adopted the system of treatment recommended by a skilful physician (Dr Dick), who had had large experience in maladies of this kind during his Indian life, the seizures gradually became less violent, and his confidence that he was ultimately to baffle the enemy remained unshaken.

As I had no opportunity of seeing him again until he was almost entirely re-established, I shall leave the progress of his restoration to be collected from his correspondence. But I must not forget to set down what his daughter Sophia afterwards told me of his conduct upon one night, in June, when he really did despair of himself. He then called his children about his bed, and took leave of them with solemn tenderness. After giving them, one by one, such advice as suited their years and characters, he added, "For myself, my dears, I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit. I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than weak and filthy in the eyes of God; but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer." He then laid his hand on their heads, and said, "God bless you! Live so that you may all hope to meet each other in a better place hereafter. And now leave me that I may turn my face to the wall." They obeyed him: but he presently fell into a deep sleep; and when he awoke from it after many hours, the crisis of extreme danger was felt by himself, and pronounced by his physician, to have been overcome.

CHAPTER IX.

GRADUAL RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF SCOTT'S HEALTH—IVANHOE IN PROGRESS—HIS SON WALTER JOINS THE EIGHTEENTH REGIMENT OF HUSSARS—SCOTT'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS SON—MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS TO MRS MACLEAN CLEPHANE—M. W. HARTSTONGE—J. G. LOCKHART—JOHN BALLANTYNE—JOHN RICHARDSON—MISS EDGEWORTH—LORD MONTAGU, ETC.—ABBOTSFORD VISITED BY PRINCE LEOPOLD OF SAXE-COBURG—DEATH OF MRS WILLIAM ERSKINE—

1819.

Before Scott left Edinburgh, on the 12th of July, he had not only concluded his bargain with Constable for another novel, but, as will appear from some of his letters, made considerable progress in the dictation of Ivanhoe.

That he already felt great confidence on the score of his health, may be inferred from his allowing his son Walter, about the middle of the month, to join the 18th Regiment of Hussars, in which he had, shortly before, received his commission as Cornet.

Scott's letters to his son, the first of his family that left the house, will merit henceforth a good deal of the reader's attention. Walter was, when he thus quitted Abbotsford to try his chances in the active world, only in the eighteenth year of his age; and the fashion of education in Scotland is such, that he had scarcely ever slept a night under a different roof from his parents, until this separation occurred. He had been treated from his cradle with all the indulgence that a man of sense can ever permit himself to show to any of his children; and for several years he had now been his father's daily companion in all his out of doors occupations and amusements. The parting was a painful one; but Scott's ambition centered in the heir of his name, and instead of fruitless pinings and lamentings, he henceforth made it his constant business to keep up such a frank correspondence with the young man as might enable himself to exert over him, when at a distance, the gentle influence of kindness, experience, and wisdom. The series of his letters to his son is, in my opinion, by far the most interesting and valuable, as respects the personal character and temper of the writer. It will easily be supposed that, as the young officer entered fully into his father's generous views of what their correspondence ought to be, and detailed every little incident of his new career with the same easy confidence as if he had been writing to a friend or elder brother not very widely differing from himself in standing, the answers abound with opinions on subjects with which I have no right to occupy or entertain my readers; but I shall introduce, in the prosecution of this work, as many specimens of Scott's paternal advice as I can hope to render generally intelligible without indelicate explanations—and more especially such as may prove serviceable to other young persons when first embarking under their own pilotage upon the sea of life. Scott's manly kindness to his boy, whether he is expressing approbation or censure of his conduct, can require no pointing out; and his practical wisdom was of that liberal order, based on such comprehensive views of man and the world, that I am persuaded it will often be found available to the circumstances of their own various cases, by young men of whatever station or profession.

I shall, nevertheless, adhere as usual to the chronological order; and one or two miscellaneous letters must accordingly precede the first article of his correspondence with the Cornet. He alludes, however, to the youth's departure in the following—

To Mrs Maclean Clephane of Torloisk.

" Abbotsford, July 15th, 1819.

" Dear Mrs Clephane,

" Nothing could give me more pleasure than to hear you are well, and thinking of looking this way. You will find all my things in very different order from when you were here last, and plenty of room for matron and miss, man and maid. We have no engagements, except to Newton Don about the 20th August—if we be alive—no unreasonable proviso in so long an engagement. My health, however, seems in a fair way of being perfectly restored. It is a joke to talk of any other remedy than that forceful but most unpleasant one—*calomel.* I cannot say I ever felt advantage from any thing else; and I am perfectly satisfied that, used as an alterative, and taken in very small quantities for a long time, it must correct all the inaccuracies of the biliary organs. At least it has done so in my case more radically than I could have believed possible. I have intermitted the regime for some days, but begin a new course next week for precaution. Dr Dick, of the East India Company's service, has put me on this course of cure, and says he never knew it fail unless when the liver was irreparably injured. I believe I shall go to Carlsbad next year. If I must go to a watering-place, I should like one where I might hope to see and learn something new myself, instead of being hunted down by some of the confounded lion-catchers who haunt English spas. I have not the art of being savage to those people, though few are more annoyed by them. I always think of Snug the Joiner—

'——If I should as lion *come in strife*
Into such place, 'twere pity on my life.'

" I have been delayed in answering your kind letter by Walter's departure from us to join his regiment, the 18th Dragoons. He has chosen a profession for which he is well suited, being of a calm but remarkably firm temper—fond of mathematics, engineering, and all sorts of calculation—clear-headed, and good-natured. When you add to this a good person and good manners, with great dexterity in horsemanship and all athletic exercises, and a strong constitution, one hopes you have the grounds of a good soldier. My own selfish wish would have been that he should have followed the law; but he really had no vocation that way, wanting the acuteness and liveliness of intellect indispensable to making a figure in that profession. So I am satisfied all is for the best, only I shall miss my gamekeeper and companion in my rides and walks. But so it was, is, and must be—the young must part from the nest, and learn to wing their own way against the storm.

" I beg my best and kindest compliments to Lady Compton. Stooping to write hurts me, or I would have sent her a few lines. As I shall be stationary here for all this season, I shall not see her, perhaps, for long enough. Mrs Scott and the girls join in best love, and I am ever, dear Mrs Clephane, your faithful and most obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

I have had some hesitation about introducing the next letter—which refers to the then recent publication of a sort of mock-tour in Scotland, entitled " Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk." Nobody but a very young and a very thoughtless person could have dreamt of putting forth such a book; yet the Epistles of the imaginary

Dr Morris have been so often denounced as a mere string of libels, that I think it fair to show how much more leniently Scott judged of them at the time. Moreover, his letter is a good specimen of the liberal courtesy with which, on all occasions, he treated the humblest aspirants in literature. Since I have alluded to Peter's Letters at all, I may as well take the opportunity of adding that they were not wholly the work of one hand.

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq. Carnbroe House, Hollytown.

"Abbotsford, July 19th, 1819.

"My dear Sir,

"*Distinguendum est.* When I receive a book *ex dono* of the author, in the general case I offer my thanks with all haste before I cut a leaf, lest peradventure I should feel more awkward in doing so afterwards, when they must not only be tendered for the well printed volumes themselves, and the attention which sent them my way, but moreover for the supposed pleasure I have received from the contents. But with respect to the learned Dr Morris, the case is totally different, and I formed the immediate resolution not to say a word about that gentleman's labours without having read them at least twice over—a pleasant task, which has been interrupted partly by my being obliged to go down the country, partly by an invasion of the Southron, in the persons of Sir John Shelley, famous on the turf, and his lady. I wish Dr Morris had been of the party, chiefly for the benefit of a little Newmarket man, called Cousins, whose whole ideas, similes, illustrations, &c. were derived from the course and training stable. He was perfectly good-humoured, and I have not laughed more this many a day.

"I think the Doctor has got over his ground admirably;—only the general turn of the book is perhaps too favourable, both to the state of our public society, and of individual character:

'His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd
Of virtues and feelings, that folly grows proud.'*

But it was, in every point of view, right to take this more favourable tone, and to throw a Claude Lorraine tint over our northern landscape. We cannot bear the actual bare truth, either in conversation, or that which approaches nearest to conversation, in a work like the Doctor's, published within the circle to which it refers.

"For the rest, the Dr has fully maintained his high character for force of expression, both serious and comic, and for acuteness of observation—*rem acu tetigit*—and his scalpel has not been idle, though his lenient hand has cut sharp and clean, and poured balm into the wound. What an acquisition it would have been to our general information to have had such a work written, I do not say fifty, but even five-and-twenty years ago; and how much of grave and gay might then have been preserved, as it were, in amber, which have now mouldered away. When I think that at an age not much younger than yours I knew Black, Ferguson, Robertson, Erskine, Adam Smith, John Home, &c. &c., and at least saw Burns, I can appreciate better than any one the value of a work which, like this, would have handed them down to posterity in their living colours. Dr Morris ought, like Nourjahad, to revive every half century, to record the fleeting manners of the age, and the interesting features of those who will be only known to posterity by their works. If I am very partial to the Doctor, which I am not inclined to deny, remember I have been bribed by his kind and delicate account of his visit to Abbotsford. Like old Cumberland, or like my own grey cat, I will e'en purr, and put up my back, and enjoy his kind flattery, even when I know it goes beyond my merits.

---

* Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

“ I wish you would come and spend a few days here, while this delightful weather lasts. I am now so well as quite to enjoy the society of my friends, instead of the woful pickle in which I was in spring, when you last favoured me. It was, however, *dignus vindice nodus,* for no less a deity descended to my aid than the potent Mercury himself, in the shape of calomel, which I have been obliged to take daily, though in small quantities, for these two months past. Notwithstanding the inconveniences of this remedy, I thrive upon it most marvellously, having recovered both sleep and appetite ; so when you incline to come this way, you will find me looking pretty *bobbishly.*—Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT.”

On the same day, Scott wrote as follows, to John Ballantyne, who had started for London, on his route to Paris in quest of articles for next winter's auction-room—and whose good offices he was anxious to engage on behalf of the Cornet, in case they should happen to be in the metropolis at the same time.

To Mr John Ballantyne, care of Messrs Longman and Co., London.

“ Abbotsford, July 19th, 1819.

“ Dear John,

“ I have only to say, respecting matters here, that they are all going on quietly. The first volume is very nearly finished, and the whole will be out in the first or second week of September. It will be well if you can report yourself in Britain by that time at farthest, as something must be done on the back of this same Ivanhoe.

“ Walter left us on Wednesday night, and will be in town by the time this reaches you, looking, I fancy, very like a cow in a fremd loaning.* He will be heard of at Miss Dumergue's. Pray look after him, and help him about his purchases.

"I hope you will be so successful in your foreign journey as to diddle the Edinburgh folk out of some cash this winter. But don't forget September, if you wish to partake the advantages thereof.

"I wish you would see what good reprints of old books are come out this year at Triphook's, and send me a note of them.—Yours very truly,

W. SCOTT."

John Ballantyne found the Cornet in London, and did for him what his father had requested.

To Mr John Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, July 26, 1819.

"Dear John,

"I have yours with the news of Walter's rattle-traps, which are abominably extravagant. But there is no help for it but submission. The things seem all such as cannot well be wanted. How the devil they mount them to such a price the tailors best know. They say it takes *nine* tailors to make a man—apparently one is sufficient to ruin him. We shall rub through here well enough, though James is rather glumpy and dumpy—chiefly, I believe, because his child is unwell. If you can make any more money for me in London, good and well. I have no spare cash till Ivanhoe comes forth.—Yours truly,

W. SCOTT.

P.S. Enclosed are sundry letters of introduction for the *ci-devant* Laird of Gilnockie."

---

* *Anglice*—a strange lane.

To Miss Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown.

"Abbotsford, July 21, 1819.

"My Dear Miss Edgeworth,

"When this shall happen to reach your hands, it will be accompanied by a second edition of Walter Scott, a *tall* copy, as collectors say, and bound in Turkey leather, garnished with all sorts of fur and frippery—not quite so well *lettered*, however, as the old and vamped original edition. In other, and more intelligible phrase, the tall cornet of Hussars, whom this will introduce to you, is my eldest son, who is now just leaving me to join his regiment in Ireland. I have charged him, and he is himself sufficiently anxious, to avoid no opportunity of making your acquaintance, as to be known to the good and the wise is by far the best privilege he can derive from my connexion with literature. I have always felt the value of having access to persons of talent and genius to be the best part of a literary man's prerogative, and you will not wonder, I am sure, that I should be desirous this youngster should have a share of the same benefit.

"I have had dreadful bad health for many months past, and have endured more pain than I thought was consistent with life. But the thread, though frail in some respects, is tough in others; and here am I with renewed health, and a fair prospect of regaining my strength much exhausted by such a train of suffering.

"I do not know when this will reach you, my son's motions being uncertain. But, find you where or when it will, it comes, dear Miss Edgworth, from the sincere admirer of your genius, and of the patriotic and excellent manner in which it has always been exerted. In which character I subscribe myself ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

I believe at the time when the foregoing letter was written, Scott and Miss Edgworth had never met. The next was addressed to a gentleman, whose acquaintance the poet had formed when collecting materials for his edition of Swift. On that occasion Mr Hartstonge was of great service to Scott—and he appears to have paid him soon afterwards a visit at Abbotsford. Mr Hartstonge was an amiable and kind hearted man, and enthusiastically devoted to literature; but his own poetical talents were undoubtedly of the sort that finds little favour either with gods or columns. He seems to have written shortly before this time to enquire about his old acquaintance's health.

To Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., Molesworth Street, Dublin.

" Abbotsford, July 21, 1819.

" My Dear Sir,

. . . . " Fortunately God Mercury descended in the shape of calomel to relieve me in this *dignus vindice nodus*, and at present my system is pretty strong. In the mean while my family are beginning to get forwards. Walter—(you remember my wading into Cauldshiels loch to save his little frigate from wreck)—is now a Cornet of six feet two inches in your Irish 18th Hussars; the regiment is now at Cork, and will probably be next removed to Dublin, so you will see your old friend with a new face; be-furred, be-feathered, and be-whiskered in the highest military *ton*. I have desired him to call upon you, should he get to Dublin on leave, or come there upon duty. I miss him here very much, for he was my companion, gamekeeper, &c. &c., and when one loses one's own health and strength, there are few things so pleasant as to see a son enjoying both in the vigour of hope and promise. Think of this, my good friend, and as you have kind affections to make some good girl happy, settle yourself in life while you are young, and lay up by so doing, a stock of domestic happiness, against age or bodily decay. There are many good things in life, whatever satirists and misanthropes may say to the contrary, but probably the best of all, next to a conscience void of offence (without which, by the by, they can hardly exist), are the quiet exercise and enjoyment of the social feelings, in which we are at once happy ourselves, and the cause of happiness to them who are dearest to us. I have no news to send you from hence. The addition to my house is completed with battlement and bartisan, but the old cottage remains hidden among creepers, until I shall have leisure, *i. e.* time, and money—to build the rest of my mansion—which I will not do hastily, as the present is amply sufficient for accommodation. Adieu, my dear sir, never reckon the degree of my regard by the regularity of my correspondence, for besides the vile diseases of laziness and procrastination, which have always beset me, I have had of late both pain and languor sufficient to justify my silence. Believe me, however, always most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

The first letter the young Cornet received from his father after mounting his "rattle-traps" was the following:

To Cornet Walter Scott, 18*th Hussars, Cork.*

"Abbotsford, Aug. 1, 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I was glad to find you got safe to the hospitable quarters of Piccadilly, and were put on the way of achieving your business well and expeditiously. You would receive a packet of introductory letters by John Ballantyne, to whom I addressed them.

"I had a very kind letter two days ago from your Colonel.* Had I got it sooner it would have saved some expense in London, but there is no help for it now. As you are very fully provided with all these appointments, you must be particular in taking care of them, otherwise the expense of replacing them will be a great burden. Colonel Murray seems disposed to show you much attention. He is, I am told, rather a reserved man, which indeed is the manner of his family. You will, therefore, be the more attentive to what he says, as well as to answer all advances he may make to you with cordiality and frankness; for if you be shy on the one hand, and he reserved on the other, you cannot have the benefit of his advice, which I hope and wish you may gain. I shall be guided by his opinion respecting your allowance: he stipulates that you shall have only two horses (not to be changed without his consent), and on no account keep a gig. You know of old how I detest that mania of driving wheel-barrows up and down, when a man has a handsome horse and can ride him. They are both foolish and expensive things, and, in my opinion, are only fit for English bagmen—therefore gig it not, I pray you.

"In buying your horses you will be very cautious. I see Colonel Murray has delicacy about assisting you directly in the matter—for he says very truly that some gentlemen make a sort of traffic in horse-flesh—from which his duty and inclination equally lead him to steer clear. But he will take care that you don't buy any that are unfit for service, as in the common course they must be approved by the commandant as *chargers*. Besides which, he will probably give you some private hints, of which avail yourself, as there is every chance of your needing much advice in this business. Two things I preach on my own experience. 1st, Never to buy an aged horse, however showy. He must have done work, and, at any rate, will be unserviceable in a few years. 2dly, To buy rather when the horse is something low in condition, that you may the better see all his points. Six years is the oldest at which I would purchase. You will run risk of being jockeyed by knowing gentlemen of your own corps parting with their *experienced* chargers to *oblige* you. Take care of this. Any good tempered horse learns the dragoon duty in wonderfully short time, and you are rider enough not to want one quite broke in. Look well about you, and out into the country. Excellent horses are bred all through Munster, and better have a clever young one than an old regimental brute foundered by repeated charges and bolts. If you see a brother officer's horse that pleases you much, and seems reasonable, look particularly how he stands on his forelegs, and for that purpose see him in the stable. If he shifts and shakes a little, have nothing to say to him. This is the best I can advise, not doubting you will be handsomely excised after all. The officer who leaves his corps may be disposing of good horses, and perhaps selling reasonable. One who continues will not, at least should not, part with a good horse without some great advantage.

---

* The then commandant of the 18th Hussars was Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Henry Murray, brother to the Earl of Mansfield.

"You will remain at Cork till you have learned your regimental duty, and then probably be despatched to some outquarter. I need not say how anxious I am that you should keep up your languages, mathematics, and other studies. To have lost that which you already in some degree possess—and that which we don't practise we soon forget—would be a subject of unceasing regret to you hereafter. You have good introductions, and don't neglect to avail yourself of them. Something in this respect your name may do for you—

a fair advantage, if used with discretion and propriety. By the way, I suspect you did not call on John Richardson.

" The girls were very dull after you left us; indeed the night you went away, Anne had hysterics, which lasted some time. Charles also was down in the mouth, and papa and mamma a little grave and dejected. I would not have you think yourself of too great importance neither, for the greatest personages are not always long missed, and to make a bit of a parody,

' Down falls the rain, up gets the sun,
Just as if Walter were not gone.'

We comfort ourselves with the hopes that you are to be happy in the occupation you have chosen, and in your new society. Let me know if there are any well-informed men among them, though I don't expect you to find out that for some time. Be civil to all till you can by degrees find out who are really best deserving.

" I enclose a letter from Sophia, which doubtless contains all the news. St Boswell's Fair rained miserably, and disappointed the misses. The weather has since been delightful, and harvest advances fast. All here goes its old round—the habits of age do not greatly change, though those of youth do. Mamma has been quite well, and so have I—but I still take calomel. I was obliged to drink some claret with Sir A. Don, Sir John Shelley, and a funny little Newmarket quizzy, called Cousins, whom they brought here with them the other day, but I was not the worse. I wish you had Sir J. S. at your elbow when you are buying your horses—he is a very knowing man on the turf. I like his lady very much. She is perfectly feminine in her manners, has good sense, and plays divinely on the harp; besides all which, she shoots wild boars, and is the boldest horsewoman I ever saw. I saw her at Paris ride like a lapwing in the midst of all the aide-de-camps and suite of the Duke of Wellington.

" Write what your horses come to, &c. Your outfit will be an expensive matter; but once settled it will be fairly launching you into life in the way you wished, and I trust you will see the necessity of prudence and a gentlemanlike economy, which consists chiefly in refusing oneself trifling indulgences until we can easily pay for them. Once more, I beg you to be attentive to Colonel Murray and to his lady. I hear of a disease among the moorfowl. I suppose they are dying for grief at your departure. Ever, my dear boy, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the same.

" 7th August, 1819.

" Dear Walter,

" . . . . I shall be curious to know how you like your brother officers, and how you dispose of your time. The drills and riding-school will, of course, occupy much of your mornings for some time. I trust, however, you will keep in view drawing, languages, &c. It is astonishing how far even half an hour a-day, regularly bestowed on one object, will carry a man in making himself master of it. The habit of dawdling away time is easily acquired, and so is that of putting every moment either to use or to amusement.

" You will not be hasty in forming intimacies with any of your brother officers, until you observe which of them are most generally respected, and likely to prove most creditable friends. It is seldom that the people who put themselves hastily forward to please, are those most worthy of being known. At the same time you will take care to return all civility which is offered, with readiness and frankness. The Italians have a proverb, which I hope you have not forgot poor Pierrotti's lessons so far as not to comprehend—'*Volto sciolto e pensieri stretti.*' There is no occasion to let any one see what you exactly think of him; and it is the less prudent, as you will find reason, in all probability, to change your opinion more than once.

"I shall be glad to hear of your being fitted with a good servant. Most of the Irish of that class are scapegraces—drink, steal, and lie like the devil. If you could pick up a canny Scot it would be well. Let me know about your mess. To drink hard is none of your habits, but even drinking what is called a certain quantity every day hurts the stomach, and by hereditary descent yours is delicate. I believe the poor Duke of Buccleuch laid the foundation of that disease which occasioned his premature death in the excesses of Villar's regiment, and I am sorry and ashamed to say, for your warning, that the habit of drinking wine, so much practised when I was a young man, occasioned, I am convinced, many of my cruel stomach complaints. You had better drink a bottle of wine on any particular occasion, than sit and soak and sipple at an English pint every day.

"All our bipeds are well. Hamlet had an inflammatory attack, and I began to think he was going mad, after the example of his great namesake, but Willie Laidlaw bled him, and he has recovered. Pussy is very well. Mamma, the girls, and Charlie join in love. Yours affectionately, W. S.

"P.S.—Always mention what letters of mine you have received, and write to me whatever comes into your head. It is the privilege of great boys when distant that they cannot tire papas by any length of detail upon any subject."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, 13th August, 1819.

"My dearest Walter,

"I am very much obliged to Colonel Murray for the trouble he has taken on your behalf. I hope he has received the letter which I wrote to him a fortnight since under Mr Freeling's cover. It enclosed a parcel of letters to you. I took the liberty of asking his advice what allowance you should have to assist you. You know pretty well my circumstances and your own, and that I wish you to be comfortable, but not in any respect extravagant; and this for your own sake, and not for that of money, which I never valued very much, perhaps not so much as I ought to have done. I think by speaking to Colonel Murray you may get at his opinion, and I have so much trust in your honour and affection as to confide in your naming your own allowance. Mean time, lest the horse should starve while the grass grows, I enclose a cheque upon Messrs Coutts for L.50, to accompt of your first year's allowance. Your paymaster will give you the money for it I dare say. You have to indorse the bill, *i. e.* write your name on the back of it.

"All concerned are pleased with your kind tokens of remembrance from London. Mamma and I like the caricatures very much. I think, however, scarce any of them shows the fancy and talent of old Gilray: he became insane, I suppose by racking his brain in search of extravagant ideas, and was supported in his helpless condition by the woman who keeps the great print shop in St James' Street, who had the generosity to remember that she had made thousands by his labour.

"Every thing here goes on in the old fashion, and we are all as well as possible, saving that Charles rode to Lawrence fair yesterday in a private excursion, and made himself sick with eating gingerbread, whereby he came to disgrace.

"Sophia has your letter of the 4th, which she received yesterday. The enclosed will help you to set up shop and to get and pay whatever is necessary. I wish we had a touch of your hand to make the parties rise in the morning, at which they show as little alertness as usual.

"I beg you will keep an account of money received and paid. Buy a little book ruled for the purpose, for pounds, shillings, and pence, and keep an account of cash received and expended. The balance ought to be cash in purse, if the book is regularly kept. But any very small expenses you can enter as "sundries, L.0: 3: 6." which saves trouble.

"You will find this most satisfactory and useful. But, indeed, arithmetic is indispensable to a soldier who means to rise in his profession. All military movements depend upon calculation of time, numbers, and distance.

"Dogs all well—cat sick—supposed with eating birds in their feathers. Sisters, brother, and mamma join in love to the "poor wounded hussa-a-r"—I dare say you have heard the song, if not, we shall send it for the benefit of the mess. Yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—Yesterday *the* 12*th* would, I suppose, produce some longings after the Peel heights."

In the following letter to Mr Richardson, we see Scott busied about certain little matters of heraldic importance which had to be settled before his patent of baronetcy could be properly made out. He also alludes to two little volumes, which he edited during this autumn—the Memorials of the Haliburtons, a thin quarto (never published)—and the poems of Patrick Carey, of which he had given specimens some years before in the Annual Register.

To John Richardson, Esq. Fludyer Street, Westminster.

"Abbotsford, 22d August, 1819.

"My dear Richardson,

"I am sorry Walter did not get to your kind domicile. But he staid but about five or six days in London, and great was his haste, as you may well suppose. He had a world of trinkums to get, for you know there goes as much to the man-millinery of a young officer of hussars as to that of an heiress on her bridal day. His complete equipage, horses not included, cost about L.360, and if you add a couple of blood horses, it will be L.200 more, besides the price of his commission, for the privilege of getting the hardness of his skull tried by a brickbat at the next meeting of Radical Reformers. I am not much afraid of these folks, however, because I remember 1793 and 1794, when the same ideas possessed a much more formidable class of the people, being received by a large proportion of farmers, shopkeepers, and others, possessed of substance. A mere mob will always be a fire of loose straw; but it is melancholy to think of the individual mischief that may be done. I did not find it quite advisable to take so long a journey as London this summer. I am quite recovered; but my last attack was of so dreadful a nature, that I wish to be quite insured against another—*i. e.* as much as one can be insured against such a circumstance—before leaving home for any length of time.

"To return to the vanities of this world from what threatened to hurry me to the next, I enclose a drawing of my arms with the supporters which the heralds here assign me. Our friend Harden seems to wish I would adopt one of his Mer-maidens, otherwise they should be both Moors, as on the left side. I have also added an impression of my seal. You can furnish Sir George Naylor with as much of my genealogy as will serve the present purpose. I shall lose no time in connecting myself by a general service with my granduncle, the last Haliburton of Dryburgh Abbey, or Newmains, as they call it. I spoke to the Lyon-office people in Edinburgh. I find my entry there will be an easy matter, the proofs being very pregnant and accessible. I would not stop for a trifling expense to register my pedigree in England, as far as you think may be necessary, to show that it is a decent one. My ancestors were brave and honest men, and I have no reason to be ashamed of them, though they were neither wealthy nor great.

"As something of an antiquary and genealogist, I should not like there were any mistakes in this matter, so I send you a small note of my descent by my father and my paternal grandmother, with a memorandum of the proofs by which they may be supported, to which I might add a whole cloud of oral witnesses. I hate the being suspected of fishing for a pedigree, or bolstering one up with false statements. How people can bring themselves to this I cannot conceive. I send you a copy of the Haliburton MS., of which I have printed twenty for the satisfaction of a few friends. You can have any part of them copied in London which ought to be registered. I should like if Sir George Naylor would take the trouble of looking at the proofs, which are chiefly extracts from the public records. I take this opportunity to send you also a copy of a little amateur-book—

Carey's Poems—a thorough bred Cavalier, and, I think, no bad versifier. Kind compliments to Mrs Richardson. Yours, my dear Richardson, most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Cornet W. Scott, 18th Hussars, Cork.

"Abbotsford, 4th Sept. 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"Your very acceptable letter of the 26th reached me to-day. I had begun to be apprehensive that the draft had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, but the very long calm must have made the packets slow in their progress, which I suppose was the occasion of the delay. Respecting the allowance, Colonel Murray informs me that from L.200 to L.250, in addition to the pay of a Cornet, ought to make a young man very comfortable. He adds, which I am much pleased to hear, that your officers are, many of them, men of moderate fortune and disposed to be economical. I had thought of L.200 as what would suit us both, but when I see the account which you very properly keep, I shall be better able to determine. It must be considered that any uncommon expense, as the loss of a horse or the like, may occasion an extra draught over and above the allowance. I like very much your methodical arrangement as to expenses; it is rather a tiresome thing at first to keep an accompt of pounds, shillings, and pence, but it is highly necessary, and enables one to see how the money actually goes. It is, besides, a good practical way of keeping up acquaintance with arithmetic, and you will soon find that the principles on which all military movements turn are arithmetical, and that though one may no doubt learn to do them by rote, yet to *understand* them, you must have recourse to numbers. Your adjutant will explain this to you. By the way, as he is a foreigner, you will have an opportunity to keep up a little of your French and German. Both are highly necessary to you; the knowledge of the last, with few other qualifications, made several officers' fortunes last war.

" I observe with pleasure you are making acquaintances among the gentry, which I hope you will not drop for want of calling, &c. I trust you have delivered all your recommendations, for it is an affront to omit doing so, both to the person who writes them, and those for whom they are designed. On the other hand, one always holds their head a little better up in the world when they keep good society. Lord and Lady Melville are to give you recommendations when you go to Dublin. I was at Melville Castle for two days and found them both well. I was also one day at Langholm lodge to meet Lord Montagu. Possibly, among your Irish friends, you may get some shooting. I shall be glad you avail yourself of any such opportunities, and also that, when you get your own horses, you hunt in the winter, if you be within the reach of hounds. Nothing confirms a man in horsemanship so well as hunting, though I do not recommend it to beginners, who are apt to learn to ride like grooms. Besides the exercise, field-sports make a young soldier acquainted with the country, and habituate him to have a good eye for distance and for taking up the *carte du pays* in general, which is essential to all, but especially to officers of light troops, who are expected to display both alertness and intelligence in reporting the nature of the country, being in fact the *eyes* of the army. In every point of view, field-sports are preferable to the in-doors' amusement of a billiard-table, which is too often the lounging-place for idle young officers, where there is nothing to be got but a habit of throwing away time, and an acquaintance with the very worst society—I mean at public billiard-rooms

—for unquestionably the game itself is a pretty one, when practised among gentlemen and not made a constant habit of. But public billiard-tables are almost always the resort of black-legs and sharpers, and all that numerous class whom the French call *Chevaliers d'Industrie*, and we *knights of the whipping-post.*

" I am glad you go to the anatomical lectures. An acquaintance with our own very extraordinary frame is a useful branch of general knowledge, and as you have some turn for drawing, it will also enable you to judge of the proper mode of disposing the limbs and muscles of your figures, should you prosecute the art so far. In fact, there is no branch of study can come much amiss to a young man, providing he does study, and very often the precise occupation of the time must be trusted to taste and opportunity.

" The White Boys made a great noise when I was a boy. But Ireland (the more is the pity) has never been without White Boys, or Right Boys, or Defenders, or Peep-of-day Boys, or some wild association or another for disturbing the peace of the country. We shall not be many degrees better if the Radical reformers be not checked. The Manchester Yeomen behaved very well, upsetting the most immense crowd ever was seen, and notwithstanding the lies in the papers, without any unnecessary violence. Mr Hunt pretends to have had several blows on his head with sabres, but has no wound to show for it. I am disposed to wish he had got such a one as once on a day I could have treated him to. I am apt to think his politic pate would have broached no more sedition.

" Miss Rutherford and Eliza Russell are now with us. We were also favoured with a visit of the Miss ———s, who are rather empty canisters, though I dare say very good girls. Anne tired of them most inhospitably. Mrs MacLean Clephane and her two unmarried daughters are now here; being, as we say, pears of another tree. Your sisters seem very fond of the young ladies, and I am glad of it, for they will see that a great deal of accomplishment and information may be completely reconciled with liveliness, fun, good-humour, and good-breeding.

"All here send love. Dogs and cat are well. I dare say you have heard from some other correspondent that poor Lady Wallace died of an inflammation, after two days' illness. Trout* has returned here several times, poor fellow, and seems to look for you; but Henry Scott is very kind to him, and he is a great favourite.

"As you Hussars smoke, I will give you one of my pipes, but you must let me know how I can send it safely. It is a very handsome one, though not my best. I will keep my *Meer-schaum* until I make my continental tour, and then you shall have that also. I hope you will get leave for a few months, and go with me. Yours very affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

About this time, as the succeeding letters will show, Abbotsford had the honour of a short visit from Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, now King of the Belgians. Immediately afterwards Scott heard of the death of Mrs William Erskine, and repaired to Edinburgh, to condole with his afflicted friend. His allusions mean while, to views of buying more land on Tweedside, are numerous. These speculations are explained in a most characteristic style to the Cornet; and we see that one of them was cut short by the tragical death of a *bonnet-laird* already introduced to the reader's notice—namely, *Lauchie Long-legs*, the admired of Geoffrey Crayon.

---

* *Lady Wallace* was a pony; *Trout* a favourite pointer which the Cornet had given, at leaving home, to the young Laird of Harden, now the Master of Polwarth.

To Cornet Walter Scott, 18th Hussars, Cork.

"Abbotsford, 27th Sept. 1819.

"My dear Walter,

"Your letter of the 10th gave me the pleasant assurance that you are well and happy, and attending to your profession. We have been jogging on here in the old fashion, somewhat varied by an unexpected visit, on Friday last, from no less a person than Prince Leopold. I conclude you will have all the particulars of this important event from the other members of the family, so I shall only say that when I mentioned the number of your regiment, the Prince said he had several friends in the 18th, and should now think he had one more, which was very polite. By the way, I hear an excellent character of your officers for regularity and gentlemanlike manners. This report gives me great pleasure, for to live in bad society will deprave the best manners, and to live in good will improve the worst.

"I am trying a sort of bargain with neighbour Nicol Milne at present. He is very desirous of parting with his estate of Faldonside, and if he will be contented with a reasonable price, I am equally desirous to be the purchaser. I conceive it will come to about L.30,000 at least. I will not agree to give a penny more; and I think that sum is probably L.2000 and more above its actual marketable value. But then it lies extremely convenient for us, and would, joined to Abbotsford, make a very gentlemanlike property, worth at least L.1800 or L.2000 a-year. I can command about L.10,000 of my own, and if I be spared life and health, I should not fear rubbing off the rest of the price, as

Nicol is in no hurry for payment. As you will succeed me in my landed property, I think it right to communicate my views to you. I am much moved by the prospect of getting at about L.2000 or L.3000 worth of marle, which lies on Milne's side of the loch, but which can only be drained on my side, so that he can make no use of it. This would make the lands of Abbotsford worth 40s. an acre over-head, excepting the sheep farm. I am sensible I might dispose of my money to more advantage, but probably to none which, in the long run, would be better for you—certainly to none which would be productive of so much pleasure to myself. The woods are thriving, and it would be easy, at a trifling expense, to restore Faldonside loch, and stock it with fish. In fact, it would require but a small dam-head. By means of a little judicious planting, added to what is already there, the estate might be rendered one of the most beautiful in this part of Scotland. Such are my present plans, my dear boy, having as much your future welfare and profit in view as the immediate gratification of my own wishes.

" I am very sorry to tell you that poor Mrs William Erskine is no more. She was sent by the medical people on a tour to the lakes of Cumberland, and was taken ill at Lowood, on Windermere. Nature, much exhausted by her previous indisposition, sunk under four days' illness. Her husband was with her and two of her daughters—he is much to be pitied.

" Mr Rees, the bookseller, told me he had met you in the streets of Cork, and reported well of the growth of your *Schnurr-bart*. I hope you know what that means. Pray write often, as the post comes so slow. I keep all your letters, and am much pleased with the frankness of the style. No word of your horses yet? but it is better not to be impatient, and to wait for good ones. I have been three times on Newark, and killed six hares each time. The two young dogs are capital good.

"I must not omit to tell you our old, and, I may add, our kind neighbour Lauchie, has departed, or, as Tom expresses it, has been fairly *flytten out o' the warld.* You know the old quarrel betwixt his brother and him about the wife—in an ill-fated hour Jock the brother came down to Lochbreist with a sister from Edinburgh, who was determined to have her share of the scolding-match; they attacked poor old Lauchie like mad folks, and reviled his wife in all sort of evil language. At length his passion was wrought up to a great pitch, and he answered, with much emotion, that if she were the greatest —— in Edinburgh, it was not their business, and as he uttered this speech, he fell down on his back, and lay a dead man before them. There is little doubt the violence of the agitation had broke a blood-vessel in the heart or brain. A very few days since he was running up and down calling for a coffin, and wishing to God he was in one; to which Swanston,* who was present, answered, he could not apply to a better hand, and he would make him one if he had a mind. He has left a will of his own making, but from some informality I think it will be set aside. His land cannot come into the market until his girl comes of age, which, by the way, makes me more able for the other bargain. His death took place at his own door, and shocking enough it is that an inoffensive creature should have been murdered (for in *foro conscientiæ* it is little better) in such a way. I went to the funeral. Very few people would take notice of Jock, whom they look on as a second

---

* John Swanston had then the care of the saw mill at Toftfield; he was one of Scott's most valued dependants, and in the sequel succeeded Tom Purdie as his henchman.

Cain. The blackcocks are very plenty. I put up fourteen cocks and hens in walking up the Clappercleuch to look at the wood. Do you not wish you had been on the outside with your gun? Tom has kept us well supplied with game; he boasts that he shot fifteen times without a miss. I shall be glad to hear that you do the same on Mr Newenham's grounds. Mamma, the girls, and Charles all join in love and affection. Believe me ever, dear Walter,

Your affectionate father,
WALTER SCOTT."

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.

"Abbotsford, 3d October, 1819.

"My dear Lord,

"I am honoured with your Buxton letter. . . . . *Anent* Prince Leopold, I only heard of his approach at eight o'clock in the morning, and he was to be at Selkirk by eleven. The magistrates sent to ask me to help them to receive him. It occurred to me he might be coming to Melrose to see the Abbey, in which case I could not avoid asking him to Abbotsford, as he must pass my very door. I mentioned this to Mrs Scott, who was lying quietly in bed, and I wish you had heard the scream she gave on the occasion. 'What have we to offer him?'—'Wine and cake,' said I, thinking to make all things easy; but she ejaculated, in a tone of utter despair, 'Cake!! where am I to get cake?' However, being partly consoled with the recollection that his visit was a very improbable incident, and curiosity, as usual, proving too strong for alarm, she set out with me in order not to miss a peep of the great man. James Skene and his lady were with us, and we gave our carriages such additional dignity as a pair of leaders could add, and went to meet him in full puff. The

Prince very civilly told me, that, though he could not see Melrose on this occasion, he wished to come to Abbotsford for an hour. New despair on the part of Mrs Scott, who began to institute a domiciliary search for cold meat through the whole city of Selkirk, which produced *one shoulder of cold lamb*. In the mean while, his Royal Highness received the civic honours of the BIRSE[*] very graciously. I had hinted to Bailie Lang,[†] that it ought only to be licked *symbolically* on the present occasion; so he flourished it three times before his mouth, but without touching it with his lips, and the Prince followed his example as directed. Lang made an excellent speech, sensible, and feeling, and well delivered. The Prince seemed much surprised at this great propriety of expression and behaviour in a magistrate, whose people seemed such a rabble, and whose whole band of music consisted in a drum and fife. He noticed to Bailie Anderson, that Selkirk seemed very populous in proportion to its extent. 'On an occasion like this it seems so,' answered the Bailie, neatly enough I thought. I question if any magistrates in the kingdom, lord mayors and aldermen not excepted, could have behaved with more decent and quiet good-breeding. Prince Leopold repeatedly alluded to this during the time he was at Abbotsford. I do not know how Mrs Scott ultimately managed; but with broiled salmon, and black-cock, and partridges, she gave him a very decent lunch; and I chanced to have some very fine old hock, which was mighty germain to the matter.

"The Prince seems melancholy, whether naturally or from habit, I do not pretend to say; but I do not remember thinking him so at Paris, where I saw him frequently, then a much poorer man than myself; yet he showed some humour, for, alluding to the crowds that followed him every where, he mentioned some place where he had gone out to shoot, but was afraid to proceed for fear of 'bagging a boy.' He said he really thought of getting some shooting-place in Scotland, and promised me a longer visit on his return. If I had had a day's notice to have *warned the waters*, we could have met him with a very respectable number of the gentry; but there was no time for this, and probably he liked it better as it was. There was only young Clifton who could have come, and he was shy and cubbish, and would not, though requested by the Selkirk people. He was perhaps ashamed to march through Coventry with them. It hung often and sadly on my mind that *he* was wanting who could and would have received him like a Prince indeed; and yet the meeting betwixt them, had they been fated to meet, would have been a very sad one. I think I have now given your lordship a very full, true, and particular account of our royal visit, unmatched even by that of King Charles at the Castle of Tillietudlem. That we did not speak of it for more than a week after it happened, and that that emphatic monosyllable, *The Prince*, is not heard amongst us more than ten times a-day, is, on the whole, to the credit of my family's understanding. The piper is the only one whose brain he seems to have endangered; for, as the Prince said he preferred him to any he had heard in the Highlands—(which, by the way, shows his Royal Highness knows nothing of the matter),—the fellow seems to have become incapable of his ordinary occupation as a forester, and has cut stick and stem without remorse to the tune of *Phail Phranse*, *i. e.* the Prince's welcome.

---

[*] See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 399.

[†] Scott's good friend, Mr Andrew Lang, Procurator-fiscal for Selkirkshire, was then chief magistrate of the county town.

"I am just going to the head-court with Donaldson, and go a day sooner to exhume certain old monuments of the Rutherfords at Jedburgh. Edgerstone* is to meet me at Jedburgh for this research, and then we shall go up with him to dinner. My best respects attend Lady Montagu. I wish this letter may reach you on a more lively day than it is written in, for it requires little to add to its dulness. Tweed is coming down very fast, the first time this summer. Believe me, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To W. Scott, Esq., 18*th Hussars, Cork.*

"Abbotsford, 14th October, 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I had your last letter, and am very glad you find pleasant society. Mrs Dundas of Arniston is so good as to send you some introductions, which you will deliver as soon as possible. You will be now in some degree accustomed to meet with strangers, and to form your estimate of their character and manners. I hope, in the mean time, the French and German are attended to; please to mention in your next letter what you are reading, and in what languages. The hours of youth, my dear Walter, are too precious to be spent all in gaiety. We must lay up in that period when our spirit is active, and our memory strong, the stores of information which are not only to facilitate our progress through life, but to amuse and interest us in our later stage of existence. I very often think what an unhappy person I should have been, if I had not done something more or less towards improving my understanding when I was at your age; and I never reflect, without severe self-condemnation, on the opportunities of acquiring knowledge which I either trifled with, or altogether neglected. I hope you will be wiser than I have been, and experience less of that self-reproach.

---

* The late John Rutherford of Edgerstone, long M.P. for Roxburghshire, was a person of high worth and universally esteemed. Scott used to say Edgerstone was his *beau ideal* of the character of a country gentleman. He was, I believe, the head of the once great and powerful clan of Rutherford.

"My last acquainted you with Mrs Erskine's death, and I grieve to say we have just received intelligence that our kind neighbour and good friend Lord Somerville is at the very last gasp. His disease is a dysentery, and the symptoms, as his brother writes to Mr Samuel Somerville, are mortal. He is at Vevay, upon his road, I suppose, to Italy, where he had purposed spending the winter. His death, for I understand nothing else can be expected, will be another severe loss to me; for he was a kind, good friend, and at my time of day men do not readily take to new associates. I must own this has been one of the most melancholy years I ever past. The poor Duke, who loved me so well—Mrs Erskine—Lord Somerville—not to mention others with whom I was less intimate, make it one year of mourning. I should not forget the Chief Baron, who, though from ill health we met of late seldom, was always my dear friend, and indeed very early benefactor. I must look forwards to seeing in your success and respectability, and in the affection and active improvement of all of you, those pleasures which are narrowed by the death of my contemporaries. Men cannot form new intimacies at my period of life, but must be happy or otherwise according to the good fortune and good conduct of those near relatives who rise around them.

"I wish much to know if you are lucky in a servant. Trust him with as little cash as possible, and keep short accounts. Many a good servant is spoiled by neglecting this simple precaution. The man is tempted to some expense of his own, gives way to it, and then has to make it up by a system of overcharge and peculation; and thus mischief begins, and the carelessness of the master makes a rogue out of an honest lad, and cheats himself into the bargain.

" I have a letter from your uncle Tom, telling me his eldest daughter is to be forthwith married to a Captain Huxley of his own regiment. As he has had a full opportunity of being acquainted with the young gentleman, and approves of the match, I have to hope that it will be a happy one. I fear there is no great fortune in the case on either side, which is to be regretted.

" Of domestic affairs I have little to tell you. The harvest has been excellent, the weather delightful; but this I must often have repeated. To-day I was thinning out fir-trees in the thicket, and the men were quite exhausted with the heat, and I myself, though only marking the trees, felt the exercise sufficiently warm. The wood is thriving delightfully. On the 28th we are to have a dance in honour of your birthday. I wish you could look in upon us for the day at least—only I am afraid we could not part with you when it was over, and so you would be in the guise of Cinderella, when she outstaid her time at the ball, and all her finery returned into its original base materials. Talking of balls, the girls would tell you the Melrose hop, where mamma presided, went off well.

" I expect poor Erskine and his daughter next week, or the week after. I went into town to see him—and found him bearing his great loss with his natural gentleness and patience. But he was sufficiently distressed, as he has great reason to be. I also expect Lord and Lady Melville here very soon. Sir William Rae (now Lord Advocate) and his lady came to us on Saturday. On Sunday Maida walked with us, and in jumping the paling at the Greentongue park contrived to hang himself up by the hind leg. He howled at first, but seeing us making towards him he stopped crying, and waved his tail by way of signal, it was supposed, for assistance. He sustained no material injury, though his leg was strangely twisted into the bars, and he was nearly hanging by it. He showed great gratitude, in his way, to his deliverers.

"This is a long letter, and little in it; but that is nothing extraordinary. All send best love—and I am ever, dear Walter, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Thomas Scott, Esq. Paymaster 70th Regiment, Canada.

"Abbotsford, 16th Oct. 1819.

"Dear Tom,

"I received yesterday your very acceptable letter, containing the news of Jessie's approaching marriage, in which, as a match agreeable to her mother and you, and relieving your minds from some of the anxious prospects which haunt those of parents, I take the most sincere interest. Before this reaches you, the event will probably have taken place. Mean time, I enclose a letter to the bride or wife, as the case may happen to be. I have sent a small token of good-will to ballast my good wishes, which you will please to value for the young lady, that she may employ it as most convenient or agreeable to her. A little more fortune would perhaps have done the young folks no harm; but Captain Huxley, being such as you describe him, will have every chance of getting forward in his profession; and the happiest marriages are often those in which there is, at first, occasion for prudence and economy. I do certainly feel a little of the surprise which you hint at, for time flies over our heads one scarce marks how, and children become marriageable ere we consider them as out of the nursery. My eldest son, Walter, has also wedded himself—but it is to a regiment of hussars. He is at present a cornet in the 18th, and quartered in Cork barracks. He is capital at most exercises, but particularly as a horseman. I do not intend he shall remain in the cavalry, however, but shall get him into the line when he is capable of promotion. Since he has chosen this profession, I shall be desirous that he follows it out in good earnest, and that can only be done by getting into the infantry.

"My late severe illness has prevented my going up to London to receive the honour which the Prince Regent has announced his intention to inflict upon me. My present intention is, if I continue as well as I have been, to go up about Christmas to get this affair over. My health was restored (I trust permanently) by the use of calomel, a very severe and painful remedy, especially in my exhausted state of body, but it has proved a radical one. By the way, *Radical* is a word in very bad odour here, being used to denote a set of blackguards a hundred times more mischievous and absurd than our old friends in 1794 and 1795. You will learn enough of the doings of the *Radical Reformers* from the papers. In Scotland we are quiet enough, excepting in the manufacturing districts, and we are in very good hands, as Sir William Rae, our old commander, is Lord Advocate. Rae has been here two or three days, and left me yesterday—he is the old man, sensible, cool-headed, and firm, always thinking of his duty, never of himself. He enquired kindly after you, and I think will be disposed to serve you, should an opportunity offer. Poor William Erskine has lost his excellent wife, after a long and wasting illness. She died at Lowood on Windermere, he having been recommended to take her upon a tour about three weeks before her death. I own I should scarce forgive a physician who should contrive to give me this addition to family distress. I went to town last week to see him, and found him, upon the whole, much better than I expected. I saw my mother on the same occasion, admirably well indeed. She is greatly better than this time two years, when she rather quacked herself a little too much. I have sent your letter to our mother, and will not fail to transmit to our other friends the agreeable news of your daughter's settlement. Our cousin, Sir Harry Macdougal, is marrying his eldest daughter to Sir Thomas Brisbane, a very good match on both sides. I have been paying a visit on the occasion, which suspends my closing this letter. I hope to hear very soon from you. Respecting our silence, I like a ghost only waited to be spoken to, and you may depend on me as a regular correspondent, when you find time to be one yourself. Charlotte and the girls join in kind love to Mrs Scott and all the family. I should like to know what you mean to do with young Walter, and whether I can assist you in that matter. Believe me, dear Tom, ever your affectionate brother,

W. SCOTT."

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, Nov. 10, 1819.

"My dear Terry,

"I should be very sorry if you thought the interest I take in you and yours so slight as not to render your last letter extremely interesting. We have all our various combats to fight in this best of all possible worlds, and, like brave fellow-soldiers, ought to assist one another as much as possible. I have little doubt, that if God spares me till my little namesake be fit to take up his share of the burden, I may have interest enough to be of great advantage to him in the entrance of life. In the present state of your own profession, you would not willingly, I suppose, choose him to follow it; and, as it is very seductive to young people of a lively temper and good taste for the art, you should, I think, consider early how you mean to dispose of little Walter, with a view, that is, to the future line of life which you would wish him to adopt. Mrs Terry has not the good health which all who know her amiable disposition and fine accomplishments would anxiously wish her; yet, with impaired health and the caution which it renders necessary, we have very frequently instances of the utmost verge of existence being attained, while robust strength is cut off in the middle career. So you must be of good heart, and hope the best in this as in other cases of a like affecting nature. I go to town on Monday, and will forward under Mr Freeling's cover as much of Ivanhoe as is finished in print. It is completed, but in the hands of a very slow transcriber; when I can collect it I will send you the MS., which you will please to keep secret from every eye. I think this will give a start, if it be worth taking, of about a month, for the work will be out on the 20th of December. It is certainly possible to adapt it to the stage, but the expense of scenery and decoration would be great, this being a tale of chivalry, not of character. There is a tale in existence, by dramatizing which, I am certain, a most powerful effect might be produced: it is called Undine, and I believe has been translated into French by Mademoiselle Montolieu, and into English from her version: do read it, and tell me your opinion: in German the character of Undine is exquisite. The only objection is that the catastrophe is unhappy, but this might be altered. I hope to be in London for ten days the end of next month; and so good by for the present, being in great haste, most truly yours,

W. SCOTT."

I conclude this chapter with a letter, written two or three days before Scott quitted Abbotsford for the winter session. It is addressed to his friend Hartstonge, who had taken the opportunity of the renewal of Scott's correspondence to solicit his opinion and assistance touching a MS. drama; and the reader will be diverted with the style in which the amiable tragedian is treated to his *quietus*:—

To Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., Dublin.

"Abbotsford, 11th Nov., 1819.

"My Dear Sir,

"I was duly favoured with your packet, containing the play, as well as your very kind letter. I will endeavour (though extremely unwilling to offer criticism on most occasions) to meet your confidence with perfect frankness. I do not consider the Tragedy as likely to make that favourable impression on the public which I would wish that the performance of a friend should effect—and I by no means recommend to you to hazard it upon the boards. In other compositions the neglect of the world takes nothing from the merit of the author; but there is something ludicrous in being *affiché* as the author of an unsuccessful play. Besides, you entail on yourself the great and eternal plague of altering and retrenching to please the humours of performers, who are, speaking generally, extremely ignorant, and capricious in proportion. These are not vexations to be voluntarily undertaken; and the truth is, that in the present day there is only one reason which seems to me adequate for the encountering the plague of trying to please a set of conceited performers and a very motley audience,—I mean the want of money, from which, fortunately, you are exempted. It is very true that some day or other a great dramatic genius may arise to strike out a new path; but I fear till this happens no great effect will be produced by treading in the old one. The reign of Tragedy seems to be over, and the very considerable poetical abilities which have been lately applied to it have failed to revive it. Should the public ever be indulged with small theatres adapted to the hours of the better ranks in life, the dramatic art may recover; at present it is in abeyance—and I do therefore advise you in all sincerity to keep the Tragedy (which I return under cover) safe under your own charge. Pray think of this as one of the most unpleasant offices of friendship—and be not angry with me for having been very frank, upon an occasion when frankness may be more useful than altogether palatable.

“ I am much obliged to you for your kind intentions towards my young Hussar. We have not heard from him for three weeks. I believe he is making out a meditated visit to Killarney. I am just leaving the country for Edinburgh, to attend my duty in the courts; but the badness of the weather in some measure reconciles me to the unpleasant change. I have the pleasure to continue the most satisfactory accounts of my health; it is to external appearance as strong as in my strongest days—indeed, after I took once more to Sancho's favourite occupations of eating and sleeping, I recovered my losses wonderfully. Very truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT.”

CHAPTER X.

POLITICAL ALARMS—THE RADICALS—LEVIES OF VOLUNTEERS—PROJECT OF THE BUCCLEUCH LEGION—DEATH OF SCOTT'S MOTHER—HER BROTHER DR RUTHERFORD—AND HER SISTER CHRISTIAN—LETTERS TO LORD MONTAGU—MR THOMAS SCOTT—CORNET SCOTT—MR LAIDLAW—AND LADY LOUISA STUART—PUBLICATION OF IVANHOE.

1819.

TOWARDS the winter of 1819 there prevailed a spirit of alarming insubordination among the mining population of Northumberland and the weavers of the west of Scotland; and Scott was particularly gratified with finding that his own neighbours at Galashiels had escaped the contagion. There can be little doubt that this exemption was principally owing to the personal influence and authority of the Laird of Abbotsford and Sheriff of the Forest; but the people of Galashiels were also fortunate in the qualities of their own beneficent landlords, Mr Scott of Gala, and Mr Pringle of Torwoodlee. The progress of the western *Reformers* by degrees led even the most important *Whigs* in that district to exert themselves in the organization of volunteer regiments, both mounted and dismounted; and, when it became generally suspected that Glasgow and Paisley maintained a dangerous correspondence with the refractory colliers of Northumberland—Scott and his friends the Lairds of Torwoodlee and Gala determined to avail themselves of the loyalty and spirit of the men of Ettrick and Teviotdale, and proposed first raising a company of sharpshooters among their own immediate neighbours, and afterwards—this plan receiving every encouragement—a legion or brigade upon a large scale, to be called the Buccleuch Legion. During November and December, 1819, these matters formed the chief daily care and occupation of the author of Ivanhoe; and though he was still obliged to dictate most of the chapters of his novel, we shall see that, in case it should be necessary for the projected levy of Foresters to march upon Tynedale, he was prepared to place himself at their head.

He had again intended, as soon as he should have finished Ivanhoe, to proceed to London and receive his baronetcy; but as that affair had been crossed at Easter by his own illness, so at Christmas it was again obliged to be put off in consequence of a heavy series of domestic afflictions. Within one week Scott lost his excellent mother, his uncle Dr Daniel Rutherford, Professor of Botany in the University of Edinburgh—and their sister, Christian Rutherford, already often mentioned as one of the dearest and most esteemed of all his friends and connexions.

The following letters require no further introduction or comment.

To the Lord Montagu, Buxton.

"Abbotsford, 12th Nov. 1819.

"My dear Lord,

* * * * * * * I wish I had any news to send your Lordship, but the best is we are all quiet here. The Galashiels weavers, both men and masters, have made their political creed known to me, and have sworn themselves anti-radical. They came in solemn procession, with their banners, and my own piper at their head, whom they had borrowed for the nonce. But

the Tweed being in flood, we could only communicate like Wallace and Bruce across the Carron. However, two deputies came through in the boat, and made me acquainted with their loyal purposes. The evening was crowned with two most distinguished actions—the weavers refusing, in the most peremptory manner, to accept of a couple of guineas to buy whisky, and the renowned John of Skye, piper in ordinary to the Laird of Abbotsford, no less steadily refusing a very handsome collection, which they offered him for his minstrelsy. All this sounds very nonsensical, but the people must be humoured and countenanced when they take the right turn, otherwise they will be sure to take the wrong. The accounts from the West sometimes make me wish our little Duke five or six years older, and able to get on horseback. It seems approaching to the old song—

> 'Come fill up our cup, come fill up our can,
> Come saddle the horses, and call up our men,
> Come open the gates, and let us go free,
> And we'll show them the bonnets of bonny Dundee.'

"I am rather too old for that work now, and I cannot look forward to it with the sort of feeling that resembled pleasure—as I did in my younger and more healthy days. However, I have got a good following here, and will endeavour to keep them together till times mend.

"My respectful compliments attend Lady Montagu, and I am always, with the greatest regard, your Lordship's very faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

To Cornet Walter Scott, 18th Hussars.

"Edinburgh, 13th Nov. 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I am much surprised and rather hurt at not hearing from you for so long a while. You ought to remember that, however pleasantly the time may be passing with you, we at home have some right to expect that a part of it (a very small part will serve the turn) should be dedicated, were it but for the sake of propriety, to let us know what you are about. I cannot say I shall be flattered by finding myself under the necessity of again complaining of neglect. To write once a week to one or other of us is no great sacrifice, and it is what I earnestly pray you to do.

" We are to have great doings in Edinburgh this winter. No less than Prince Gustavus of Sweden is to pass the season here, and do what Princes call studying. He is but half a Prince either, for this Northern Star is somewhat shorn of his beams. His father was, you know, dethroned by Buonaparte, at least by the influence of his arms, and one of his generals, Bernadotte, made heir of the Swedish throne in his stead. But this youngster, I suppose, has his own dreams of royalty, for he is nephew to the Emperor of Russia (by the mother's side), and that is a likely connexion to be of use to him, should the Swedish nobles get rid of Bernadotte, as it is said they wish to do. Lord Melville has recommended the said Prince particularly to my attention, though I do not see how I can do much for him.

" I have just achieved my grand remove from Abbotsford to Edinburgh—a motion which you know I do not make with great satisfaction. We had the Abbotsford hunt last week. The company was small, as the newspapers say, but select, and we had excellent sport, killing eight hares. We coursed on Gala's ground, and he was with us. The dinner went off with its usual alacrity, but we wanted you and Sally to ride and mark for us.

"I enclose another letter from Mrs Dundas of Arniston. I am afraid you have been careless in not delivering those I formerly forwarded, because in one of them, which Mrs Dundas got from a friend, there was enclosed a draught for some money. I beg you will be particular in delivering any letters intrusted to you, because though the good-nature of the writers may induce them to write to be of service to you, yet it is possible that they may, as in this instance, add things which are otherwise of importance to their correspondents. It is probable that you may have picked up among your military friends the idea that the mess of a regiment is all in all sufficient to itself; but when you see a little of the world you will be satisfied that none but pedants—for there is pedantry in all professions—herd exclusively together, and that those who do so are laughed at in real good company. This you may take on the authority of one who has seen more of life and society, in all its various gradations, from the highest to the lowest, than a whole hussar regimental mess, and who would be much pleased by knowing that you reap the benefit of an experience which has raised him from being a person of small consideration, to the honour of being father of an officer of hussars. I therefore enclose another letter from the same kind friend, of which I pray you to avail yourself. In fact, those officers who associate entirely among themselves see and know no more of the world than their messman, and get conceited and disagreeable by neglecting the opportunities offered for enlarging their understanding. Every distinguished soldier whom I have known, and I have known many, was a man of the world, and accustomed to general society.

"To sweeten my lecture, I have to inform you that, this being quarter day, I have a remittance of L.50 to send you whenever you are pleased to let me know it will be acceptable—for, like a ghost, I will not speak again till I am spoken to.

"I wish you not to avail yourself of your leave of absence this winter, because, if my health continues good, I shall endeavour to go on the Continent next summer, and should be very desirous to have you with me; therefore, I beg you to look after your French and German. We had a visit from a very fine fellow indeed at Abbotsford, Sir Thomas Brisbane, who long commanded a brigade in the peninsula. He is very scientific, but bores no one with it, being at the same time a well informed man on all subjects, and particularly alert in his own profession, and willing to talk about what he has seen. Sir Harry Hay Macdougal, whose eldest daughter he is to marry, brought him to Abbotsford on a sort of wedding visit, as we are cousins according to the old fashion of country kin; Beardie, of whom Sir Harry has a beautiful picture, being a son of an Isabel Macdougal, who was, I fancy, grand-aunt to Sir Harry.

"Once more, my dear Walter, write more frequently, and do not allow yourself to think that the first neglect in correspondence I have ever had to complain of has been on your part. I hope you have received the Meerschaum pipe.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 3d December, 1819.

"My dear Walter,

"I hope your servant proves careful and trusty. Pray let me know this. At any rate, do not trust him a bit further than you can help it, for in buying any thing you will get it much cheaper yourself than he will. We are now settled for the winter; that is, all of them excepting myself, who must soon look southwards. On

Saturday we had a grand visiter, *i. e.*, the Crown Prince of Sweden, under the name of Count Itterburg. His travelling companion or tutor is Baron de Polier, a Swiss of eminence in literature and rank. They took a long look at King Charles XII., who, you cannot have forgotten, keeps his post over the diningroom chimney; and we were all struck with the resemblance betwixt old Iron-head, as the janissaries called him, and his descendant. The said descendant is a very fine lad, with very soft and mild manners, and we passed the day very pleasantly. They were much diverted with Captain Adam, who outdid his usual outdoings, and, like the barber of Bagdad, danced the dance and sung the song of every person he spoke of.

"I am concerned I cannot give a very pleasant account of things here. Glasgow is in a terrible state. The Radicals had a plan to seize on 1000 stand of arms, as well as a depôt of ammunition which had been sent from Edinburgh Castle for the use of the volunteers. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Thomas Bradford, went to Glasgow in person, and the whole city was occupied with patroles of horse and foot, to deter them from the meditated attack on the barracks. The arms were then delivered to the volunteers, who are said to be 4000 on paper; how many effective and trustworthy, I know not. But it was a new sight in Scotland on a Sunday to see all the inhabitants in arms, soldiers patroling the streets, and the utmost precaution of military service exacted and observed in an apparently peaceful city.

"The Old Blue Regiment of volunteers was again summoned together yesterday. They did not muster very numerous, and looked most of them a little *ancient*. However, they are getting recruits fast, and then the veterans may fall out of the ranks. The Commander-in-Chief has told the President that he may soon be obliged to leave the charge of the castle to these armed citizens. This looks serious. The President * made one of the most eloquent addresses that ever was heard, to the Old Blues. The Highland chiefs have offered to raise their clans, and march them to any point in Scotland where their services shall be required. To be sure, the Glasgow folks would be a little surprised at the arrival of Dugald Dhu, 'brogues an' brochan an' a'.' I shall, I think, bid Ballantyne send you a copy of his weekly paper, which often contains things you would like to see, and will keep you in mind of Old Scotland.

"They are embodying a troop of cavalry in Edinburgh—nice young men and good horses. They have paid me the compliment to make me an honorary member of the corps, as my days of active service have been long over. Pray take care, however, of my sabre, in case the time comes which must turn out all.

"I have almost settled that, if things look moderately tranquil in Britain in spring or summer, I will go abroad, and take Charles, with the purpose of leaving him, for two or three years, at the famous institution of Fellenborg, near Berne, of which I hear very highly. Two of Fraser Tytler's sons are there, and he makes a very favourable report of the whole establishment. I think that such a residence abroad will not only make him well acquainted with French and German, as indeed he will hear nothing else, but also prevent his becoming an Edinburgh *petit-maître* of fourteen or fifteen, which he could otherwise scarce avoid. I mentioned to you that I should be particularly glad to get you leave of absence, providing it does not interfere with your duty, in order that you may go with us. If I have cash enough I will also take your sister and mamma, and you might return home with them by Paris, in case I went on to Italy. All this is doubtful, but I think it is almost certain that Charles and I go, and hope to have you with us. This will be probably about July next, and I wish you particularly to keep it in view. If these dark prospects become darker, which God forbid! neither you nor I will have it in our power to leave the post to which duty calls us.

---

* The Right Honourable Charles Hope, Lord President of the Court of Session, was Colonel-commandant of the Old Blues, or First Regiment of Edinburgh Volunteers.

"Mamma and the girls are quite well, and so is Master Charles, who is of course more magnificent, as being the only specimen of youthhead at home. He has got an old broadsword hanging up at his bedhead, which, to be the more ready for service, hath no sheath. To this I understand we are to trust for our defence against the Radicals. Anne (notwithstanding the assurance) is so much afraid of the disaffected, that last night, returning with Sophia from Portobello, where they had been dancing with the Scotts of Harden, she saw a Radical in every man that the carriage passed. Sophia is of course wise and philosophical, and mamma has not yet been able to conceive why we do not catch and hang the whole of them, untried and unconvicted. Amidst all their various emotions, they join in best love to you; and I always am very truly yours,

W. Scott.

"P.S.—I shall set off for London on the 25th."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 17th December, 1819.

"My dear Walter,

"I have a train of most melancholy news to acquaint you with. On Saturday I saw your grandmother perfectly well, and on Sunday the girls drank tea with her, when the good old lady was more than usually in spirits; and, as if she had wished to impress many things on their memory, told over a number of her old stories with her usual alertness and vivacity. On Monday she had an indisposition, which proved to be a paralytic affection, and on Tuesday she was speechless, and had lost the power of one side, without any hope of recovery, although she may linger some days. But what is very remarkable, and no less shocking, Dr Rutherford, who attended his sister in perfect health upon Tuesday, died himself upon the Wednesday morning. He had breakfasted without intimating the least illness, and was dressed to go out, and particularly to visit my mother, when he sunk backwards, and died in his daughter Anne's arms, almost without a groan. To add to this melancholy list, our poor friend, Miss Christie, is despaired of. She was much affected by my mother's fatal indisposition, but does not know as yet of her brother's death.

"Dr Rutherford was a very ingenious as well as an excellent man, more of a gentleman than his profession too often are, for he could not take the backstairs mode of rising in it, otherwise he might have been much more wealthy. He ought to have had the Chemistry class, as he was one of the best chemists in Europe;* but superior interest assigned it to another, who, though a neat experimentalist, is not to be compared to poor Daniel for originality of genius. Since you knew him his health was broken and his spirits dejected, which may be traced to the loss of his eldest son on board an East Indiaman, and also, I think, to a slight paralytic touch which he had some years ago.

---

* "The subject of his *Thesis* is singular, and entitles Rutherford to rank very high among the chemical philosophers of modern times. Its title is "De Aere Mephitico," &c.—It is universally admitted that Dr Rutherford first discovered this gas—the reputation of his discovery being speedily spread through Europe, his character as a chemist of the first eminence was firmly established, and much was

"To all this domestic distress I have to add the fearful and unsettled state of the country. All the regular troops are gone to Glasgow. The Mid-Lothian Yeomanry and other corps of volunteers went there on Monday, and about 5000 men occupied the town. In the mean while, we were under considerable apprehension here, the Castle being left in the charge of the city volunteers and a few veterans.

"All our corner, high and low, is loyal. Torwoodlee, Gala, and I, have offered to raise a corps, to be called the Loyal Foresters, to act any where south of the Forth. If matters get worse, I will ask leave of absence for you from the Commander-in-chief, because your presence will be materially useful to levy men, and you can only be idle where you are, unless Ireland should be disturbed. Your old corps of the Selkirkshire Yeomanry have been under orders, and expect to be sent either to Dumfries or Carlisle. Berwick is dismantled, and they are removing the stores, cannon, &c., from one of the strongest places here, for I defy the devil to pass the bridge at Berwick, if reasonably well kept by 100 men. But there is a spirit of consternation implied in many of the orders, which, *entre nous*, I like worse than what I see or know of the circumstances which infer real danger. For myself I am too old to fight, but nobody is too old to die, like a man of virtue and honour, in defence of the principles he has always maintained.

"I would have you to keep yourself ready to return

augured from a young man in his twenty-second year having distinguished himself so remarkably."—BOWER's *History of the University of Edinburgh*, vol. iii. (1830), pp. 260–1.

here suddenly, in case the Duke of York should permit your temporary services in your own country, which, if things grow worse, I will certainly ask. The fearful thing is the secret and steady silence observed by the Radicals in all they do. Yet, without any thing like effective arms or useful discipline, without money and without a commissariat, what can they do, but, according to their favourite toast, have blood and plunder? Mamma and the girls, as well as Charles, send kind love. Your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Mr William Laidlaw, Kaeside.

"Edinburgh, Dec. 20, 1819.

"My dear Willie,

"Distress has been very busy with me since I wrote to you. I have lost, in the course of one week, my valued relations, Dr and Miss Rutherford—happy in this, that neither knew of the other's dissolution. My dear mother has offered me deeper subject of affliction, having been struck with the palsy, and being now in such a state that I scarce hope to see her again.

"But the strange times compel me, under this pressure of domestic distress, to attend to public business. I find Mr Scott of Gala agrees with me in thinking we should appeal at this crisis to the good sense and loyalty of the lower orders, and we have resolved to break the ice, and be the first in the Lowlands, so far as I have yet heard of, to invite our labourers and those over whom circumstances and fortune give us influence, to rise with us in arms, and share our fate. You know, as well as any one, that I have always spent twice the income of my property in giving work to my neighbours, and I hope they will not be behind the Galashiels people, who are very zealous. Gala and I go hand in hand, and propose to raise at least a company each of men, to be drilled as sharpshooters or infantry, which will be a lively and interesting amusement for the young fellows. The dress we propose to be as simple, and at the same time as serviceable as possible;—a jacket and trowsers of Galashiels grey cloth, and a smart bonnet with a small feather, or, to save even that expense, a sprig of holly. And we will have shooting at the mark, and prizes, and fun, and a little whisky, and daily pay when on duty or drill. I beg of you, dear Willie, to communicate my wish to all who have received a good turn at my hand, or may expect one, or may be desirous of doing me one—(for I should be sorry Darnick and Brigend were beat)—and to all other free and honest fellows who will take share with me on this occasion. I do not wish to take any command farther than such as shall entitle me to go with the corps, for I wish it to be distinctly understood that, in whatever capacity, *I go with them*, and take a share in good or bad as it casts up. I cannot doubt that I will have your support, and I hope you will use all your enthusiasm in our behalf. Morrison volunteers as our engineer. Those who I think should be spoke to are the following, among the higher class—

"John Usher.* He should be lieutenant, or his son ensign.

"Sam Somerville.† I will speak to him—he may be lieutenant, if Usher declines; but I think in that case Usher should give us his son.

---

* Mr Usher has already been mentioned as Scott's predecessor in the property of Toftfield. He now resided near those lands, and was Scott's tenant on the greater part of them.

† Samuel Somerville, W. S. (a son of the historian of Queen Anne) had a pretty villa at Lowood, on the Tweed, immediately opposite the seat of his relation, Lord Somerville, of whose estate he had the management.

"Young Nicol Milne* is rather young, but I will offer to his father to take him in.

"Harper† is a *sine quo non*. Tell him I depend on him for the honour of Darnick. I should propose to him to take a gallant halbert.

"Adam Ferguson thinks you should be our adjutant. John Ferguson I propose for captain. He is steady, right bold, and has seen much fire. The auld captain will help us in one shape or other. For myself, I know not what they propose to make of me, but it cannot be any thing very active. However, I should like to have a steady quiet horse, drilled to stand fire well, and if he has these properties, no matter how stupid, so he does not stumble. In this case the price of such a horse will be no object.

"These, my dear friend, are your beating orders. I would propose to raise about sixty men, and not to take old men. John the Turk‡ will be a capital corporal; and I hope in general that all my young fellows will go with me, leaving the older men to go through necessary labour. Sound Tom what he would like. I think, perhaps, he would prefer managing matters at home in your absence and mine at drill.

"John of Skye is cock-a-hoop upon the occasion, and I suppose has made fifty blunders about it by this time. You must warn Tom Jamieson, Gordon Winness, John Swanston (who will carry off all the prizes at shooting), Davidson, and so forth.

"If you think it necessary, a little handbill might be circulated. But it may be better to see if Government will accept our services; and I think, in the situation of the country, when work is scarce, and we offer pay for their playing themselves, we should have choice of men. But I would urge no one to do what he did not like.

---

* Nicol Milne, Esq. (now advocate), eldest son of the Laird of Faldonside.

† Harper, keeper of a little inn at Darnick, was a gallant and spirited yeoman—uniformly the gainer of the prizes at every contest of strength and agility in that district.

‡ One of Scott's foresters—thus designated as being, in all senses of the word, a *gallant* fellow.

"The very precarious state of my poor mother detains me here, and makes me devolve this troublesome duty upon you. All you have to do, however, is to sound the men, and mark down those who seem zealous. They will perhaps have to fight with the pitmen and colliers of Northumberland, for defence of their firesides, for these literal *blackguards* are got beyond the management of their own people. And if such is the case, better keep them from coming into Scotland, than encounter the mischief they might do there. Yours always most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Thomas Scott, Esq., 70th Regiment, Kingston, Canada.

"Edinburgh, 22d December, 1819.

"My dear Tom,

"I wrote you about ten days since, stating that we were all well here. In that very short space a change so sudden and so universal has taken place among your friends here, that I have to communicate to you a most miserable catalogue of losses. Our dear mother was on Sunday the 12th December in all her usual strength and alertness of mind. I had seen and conversed with her on the Saturday preceding, and never saw her better in my life of late years. My two daughters drank tea with her on Sunday, when she was uncommonly lively, telling them a number of stories, and being in rather unusual spirits, probably from the degree of excitation which sometimes is remarked to precede a paralytic affection. In the course of Monday she received that fatal summons, which at first seemed slight; but in the night betwixt Monday and Tuesday our mother lost the use both of speech and of one side. Since that time she has lain in bed constantly, yet so sensible as to see me and express her earnest blessing on all of us. The power of speech is totally lost; nor is there any hope at her advanced age, that the scene can last long. Probably a few hours will terminate it. At any rate, life is not to be wished, even for our nearest and dearest, in those circumstances. But this heavy calamity was only the commencement of our family losses. Dr Rutherford, who had seemed perfectly well, and had visited my mother upon Tuesday the 14th, was suddenly affected with gout in his stomach, or some disease equally rapid, on Wednesday the 15th, and without a moment's warning or complaint, fell down a dead man, almost without a single groan. You are aware of his fondness for animals; he was just stroking his cat after eating his breakfast, as usual, when, without more warning than a half-uttered exclamation, he sunk on the ground, and died in the arms of his daughter Anne. Though the Doctor had no formed complaint, yet I have thought him looking poorly for some months; and though there was no failure whatever in intellect, or any thing which approached it, yet his memory was not so good, and I thought he paused during the last time he attended me, and had difficulty in recollecting the precise terms of his recipe. Certainly there was a great decay of outward strength. We were very anxious about the effect this fatal news was likely to produce on the mind and decayed health of our aunt, Miss C. Rutherford, and resolved, as her health had been gradually falling off ever since she returned from Abbotsford, that she should never learn any thing of it until it was impossible to conceal it longer. But God had so ordered it that she was never to know the loss she had sustained, and which she would have felt so deeply. On Friday the 17th December, the second day after her brother's death, she expired, without a groan and without suffering, about six in the morning. And so we lost an excellent and warm-hearted relation, one of the few women I ever knew whose strength of mental faculties enabled her, at a mature period of life, to supply the defects of an imperfect education. It is a most uncommon and afflicting circumstance, that a brother and two sisters should be taken ill the same day—that two of them should die without any rational possibility of the survivance of the third—and that no one of the three could be affected by learning the loss of the other. The Doctor was buried on Monday 20th, and Miss Rutherford this day (Wednesday 22d), in the burial place adjoining to and surrounding one of the new Episcopal chapels,* where Robert Rutherford † had purchased a burial ground of some extent, and parted with one half to the Russells. It is surrounded with a very high wall, and all the separate burial grounds, five I think in number, are separated by party walls going down to the depth of twelve feet, so as to prevent the possibility either of encroachment, or of disturbing the relics of the dead. I have purchased one half of Miss Russell's interest in this sad spot, moved by its extreme seclusion, privacy, and security. When poor Jack was buried in the Greyfriars' churchyard, where my father and Anne lie,‡ I thought their graves more encroached upon than I liked to witness; and in this new place I intend to lay our poor mother when the scene shall close; so that the brother and the two sisters, whose fate has been so very closely entwined in death may not be divided in the grave,—and this I hope you will approve of.

---

* St John's Chapel.

† Robert Rutherford, Esq., W.S., son to the Professor of Botany.

‡ " Our family heretofore buried in the Grey Friar's Churchyard, close by the entrance to Heriot's Hospital, and on the southern or left-hand side as you pass from the churchyard."—*MS. Memorandum.*

" *Thursday, December* 23*d.*—My mother still lingers this morning, and as her constitution is so excellent, she may perhaps continue to exist some time, or till another stroke. It is a great consolation that she is perfectly easy. All her affairs of every sort have been very long arranged for this great change, and with the assistance of Donaldson and Macculloch, you may depend, when the event takes place, that your interest will be attended to most pointedly. I hope our civil tumults here are like to be ended by the measures of Parliament. I mentioned in my last that Kinloch of Kinloch was to be tried for sedition. He has forfeited his bail, and was yesterday laid under outlawry for non-appearance. Our neighbours in Northumberland are in a deplorable state; upwards of 50,000 blackguards are ready to rise between Tyne and Wear.* On the other hand, the Scottish frontiers are steady and loyal, and arming fast. Scott of Gala and I have offered 200 men, all fine strapping young fellows, and good marksmen, willing to go any where with us. We could easily double the number. So the necessity of the times has made me get on horseback once more. Our mother has at different times been perfectly conscious of her situation, and knew every one, though totally unable to speak. She seemed to take a very affectionate farewell of me the last time I saw her, which was the day before yesterday; and as she was much agitated, Dr Keith advised I should not see her again unless she seemed to desire it, which hitherto she has not done. She sleeps constantly, and will probably be so removed. Our family sends love to yours. Yours most affectionately,

---

* This was a ridiculous exaggerated report of that period of alarm.

WALTER SCOTT."

Scott's excellent mother died on the 24th December—the day after he closed the foregoing letter to his brother.

On the 18th, in the midst of these accumulated afflictions, the romance of Ivanhoe made its appearance. The date has been torn from the following letter, but it was evidently written while all these events were fresh and recent.

To the Lady Louisa Stuart, Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Dear Lady Louisa,

"I am favoured with your letter from Ditton, and am glad you found any thing to entertain you in Ivanhoe. Novelty is what this giddy-paced time demands imperiously, and I certainly studied as much as I could to get out of the old beaten track, leaving those who like to keep the road, which I have rutted pretty well. I have had a terrible time of it this year, with the loss of dear friends and near relations; it is almost fearful to count up my losses, as they make me bankrupt in society. My brother-in-law; our never-to-be-enough regretted Duke; Lord Chief Baron,* my early, kind, and constant friend, who took me up when I was a young fellow of little mark or likelihood; the wife of my intimate friend William Erskine; the only son of my friend David Hume, a youth of great promise, and just entering into life, who had grown up under my eye from childhood; my excellent mother; and, within a few days, her surviving brother and sister. My mother was the only one of these whose death was the natural consequence of very advanced life. And our sorrows are not at an end. A sister of my mother's, Mrs Russell of Ashestiel, long deceased, had left (besides several sons, of whom only one now survives and is in India) three daughters, who lived with her youngest sister, Miss Rutherford, and were in the closest habits of intimacy with us. The eldest of these girls, and a most excellent creature she is, was in summer so much shocked by the sudden news of the death of one of the brothers I have mentioned, that she was deprived of the use of her limbs by an affection either nervous or paralytic. She was slowly recovering from this afflicting and helpless situation when the sudden fate of her aunts and uncle, particularly of her who had acted as a mother to the family, brought on a new shock; and though perfectly possessed of her mind, she has never since been able to utter a word. Her youngest sister, a girl of one or two and twenty, was so much shocked by this scene of accumulated distress, that she was taken very ill, and having suppressed and concealed her disorder, relief came too late, and she has been taken from us also. She died in the arms of the elder sister, helpless as I have described her; and to separate the half dead from the actual corpse was the most melancholy thing possible. You can hardly conceive, dear Lady Louisa, the melancholy feeling of seeing the place of last repose belonging to the devoted family open four times within so short a space, and to meet the same group of sorrowing friends and relations on the same sorrowful occasion. Looking back on those whom I have lost, all well known to me excepting my brother-in-law, whom I could only judge of by the general report in his favour, I can scarce conceive a group possessing more real worth and amiable qualities, not to mention talents and accomplishments. I have never felt so truly what Johnson says so well—

---

* The Right Hon. Robert Dundas of Arniston died 17th June, 1819.

‘ Condemn'd to Hope's delusive mine,
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away.’*

“ I am not sure whether it was your ladyship, or the poor Duchess of Buccleuch, who met my mother once, and flattered me by being so much pleased with the good old lady. She had a mind peculiarly well stored with much acquired information and natural talent, and as she was very old, and had an excellent memory, she could draw without the least exaggeration or affectation the most striking pictures of the past age. If I have been able to do any thing in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me. She connected a long period of time with the present generation, for she remembered, and had often spoken with, a person who perfectly recollected the battle of Dunbar, and Oliver Cromwell's subsequent entry into Edinburgh. She preserved her faculties to the very day before her final illness; for our friends Mr and Mrs Scott of Harden visited her on the Sunday; and, coming to our house after, were expressing their surprise at the alertness of her mind, and the pleasure which she had in talking over both ancient and modern events. She had told them with great accuracy, the real story of the Bride of Lammermuir, and pointed out wherein it differed from the novel. She had all the names of the parties, and detailed (for she was a great genealogist) their connexion with existing families. On the subsequent Monday she was struck with a paralytic affection, suffered little, and that with the utmost patience; and what was God's reward, and a great one to her innocent and benevolent life, she never knew that her brother and sister, the last thirty years younger than herself, had trodden the dark path before her. She was a strict economist, which she said enabled her to be liberal; out of her little income of about L.300 a-year she bestowed at least a third in well chosen charities, and with the rest lived like a gentlewoman, and even with hospitality more general than seemed to suit her age; yet I could never prevail on her to accept of any assistance. You cannot conceive how affecting it was to me to see the little preparations of presents which she had assorted for the New Year—for she was a great observer of the old fashions of her period—and to think that the kind heart was cold which delighted in all these acts of kindly affection. I should apologize, I believe, for troubling your ladyship with these melancholy details, but you would not thank me for a letter written with constraint, and my mind is at present very full of this sad subject, though I scarce know any one to whom I would venture to say so much. I hear no good news of Lady Anne, though Lord Montagu writes cautiously. The weather is now turning milder, and may, I hope, be favourable to her complaint. After my own family, my thought most frequently turns to these orphans, whose parents I loved and respected so much.—I am always, dear Lady Lousia, your very respectful and obliged

---

* Lines on the death of Mr Robert Levet.

WALTER SCOTT."

There is in the library at Abbotsford a fine copy of Baskerville's folio Bible, two vols., printed at Cambridge in 1763; and there appears on the blank leaf, in the trembling handwriting of Scott's mother, this inscription—"*To my dear son, Walter Scott, from his affectionate mother, Anne Rutherford, January 1st*, 1819." Under these words her son has written as follows:— "This Bible was the gift of my grandfather Dr John Rutherford to my mother, and presented by her to me; being, alas! the last gift which I was to receive from that excellent parent, and, as I verily believe, the thing which she most loved in the world,—not only in humble veneration of the sacred contents, but as the dearest pledge of her father's affection to her. As such she gave it to me; and as such I bequeath it to those who may represent me—charging them carefully to preserve the same, in memory of those to whom it has belonged. 1820."

If literary success could have either filled Scott's head or hardened his heart, we should have no such letters as those of December, 1819. Ivanhoe was received throughout England with a more clamorous delight than any of the *Scotch novels* had been. The volumes (three in number) were now, for the first time, of the post 8vo form, with a finer paper than hitherto, the press-work much more elegant, and the price accordingly raised from eight shillings the volume to ten; yet the copies sold in this original shape were twelve thousand.

I ought to have mentioned sooner, that the original intention was to bring out Ivanhoe as the production of a new hand, and that, to assist this impression, the work was printed in a size and manner unlike the preceding ones; but Constable, when the day of publication approached, remonstrated against this experiment, and it was accordingly abandoned.

The reader has already been told that Scott dictated the greater part of this romance. The portion of the MS. which is his own appears, however, not only as well and firmly executed as that of any of the Tales of My Landlord, but distinguished by having still fewer erasures and interlineations, and also by being in a smaller hand. The fragment is beautiful to look at—many pages together without one alteration. It is, I suppose, superfluous to add, that in no instance did Scott re-write his prose before sending it to the press. Whatever may have been the case with his poetry, the world uniformly received the *prima cura* of the novelist.

As a work of art, Ivanhoe is perhaps the first of all Scott's efforts, whether in prose or in verse; nor have the strength and splendour of his imagination been displayed to higher advantage than in some of the scenes of this romance. But I believe that no reader who is capable of thoroughly comprehending the author's Scotch characters and Scotch dialogue will ever place even Ivanhoe, as a work of genius, on the same level with Waverley or the Heart of Mid-Lothian.

There is, to me, something so remarkably characteristic of Scott's mind and manner in a particular passage of the Introduction, which he penned ten years afterwards for this work, that I must be pardoned for extracting it here. He says:—"The character of the fair Jewess found so much favour in the eyes of some fair readers, that the writer was censured, because, when arranging the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the hand of Wilfred to Rebecca, rather than the less interesting Rowena. But, not to mention that the prejudices of the age rendered such an union almost impossible, the author may, in passing, observe, that he thinks a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp, is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity. Such is not the recompense which Providence has deemed worthy of suffering merit; and it is a dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most common readers of romance, that rectitude of conduct and of principle are either naturally allied with, or adequately rewarded by, the gratification of our passions, or attainment of our wishes. In a word, if a virtuous and self-denied character is dismissed with temporal wealth, greatness, rank, or the indulgence of such a rashly formed or ill assorted passion as that of Rebecca for Ivanhoe, the reader will be apt to say, verily Virtue has had its reward. But a glance on the great picture of life will show, that the duties of self-denial, and the sacrifice of passion to principle, are seldom thus remunerated; and that the internal consciousness of their high-minded discharge of duty, produces on their own reflections a more adequate recompense, in the form of that peace which the world cannot give or take away."

The introduction of the charming Jewess and her father originated, I find, in a conversation that Scott held with his friend Skene during the severest season of his bodily sufferings in the early part of this year. "Mr Skene," says that gentleman's wife, "sitting by his bedside, and trying to amuse him as well as he could in the intervals of pain, happened to get on the subject of the Jews, as he had observed them when he spent some time in Germany in his youth. Their situation had naturally made a strong impression; for in those days they retained their own dress and manners entire, and were treated with considerable austerity by their Christian neighbours, being still locked up at night in their own quarter by great gates; and Mr Skene, partly in seriousness, but partly from the mere wish to turn his mind at the moment upon something that might occupy and divert it, suggested that a group of Jews would be an interesting feature if he could contrive to bring them into his next novel." Upon the appearance of Ivanhoe, he reminded Mr Skene of this conversation, and said, "You will find this book owes not a little to your German reminiscences." Mrs Skene adds: "Dining with us one day, not long before Ivanhoe was begun, something that was mentioned led him to describe the sudden death of an advocate of his acquaintance, a Mr Elphinstone, which occurred in the *Outer-house* soon after he was called to the bar. It was, he said, no wonder, that it had left a vivid impression on his mind, for it was the first sudden death he ever witnessed; and he now related it so as to make us all feel as if we had the scene passing before our eyes. In the death of the Templar in Ivanhoe, I recognised the very picture—I believe I may safely say the very words."*

By the way, before Ivanhoe made its appearance, I had myself been formally admitted to the author's secret; but had he favoured me with no such confidence, it would have been impossible for me to doubt that I had been present some months before at the conversation which suggested, and indeed supplied all the materials of, one of its most amusing chapters. I allude to that in which our Saxon terms for animals in the field, and our Norman equivalents for them as they appear on the table, and so on, are explained and commented on. All this Scott owed to the after-dinner talk one day in Castle-street of his old friend Mr William Clerk,—who, among other elegant pursuits, has cultivated the science of philology very deeply.

I cannot conclude this chapter without observing that the publication of Ivanhoe marks the most brilliant epoch in Scott's history as the literary favourite of his contemporaries. With the novel which he next put forth, the immediate sale of these works began gradually to decline;

---

* See Waverley Novels, vol. xvii. p. 379.

and though even when that had reached its lowest declension, it was still far above the most ambitious dreams of any other novelist, yet the publishers were afraid the announcement of any thing like a falling-off might cast a damp over the spirits of the author. He was allowed to remain, for several years, under the impression that whatever novel he threw off commanded at once the old triumphant sale of ten or twelve thousand, and was afterwards, when included in the collective edition, to be circulated in that shape also as widely as Waverley or Ivanhoe. In my opinion, it would have been very unwise in the booksellers to give Scott any unfavourable tidings upon such subjects after the commencement of the malady which proved fatal to him,—for that from the first shook his mind; but I think they took a false measure of the man when they hesitated to tell him exactly how the matter stood, throughout 1820 and the three or four following years, when his intellect was as vigorous as it ever had been, and his heart as courageous; and I regret their scruples (among other reasons), because the years now mentioned were the most costly ones in his life; and for every twelvemonths in which any man allows himself, or is encouraged by others, to proceed in a course of unwise expenditure, it becomes proportionably more difficult, as well as painful for him to pull up, when the mistake is at length detected or recognised.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VISIONARY—THE PEEL OF DARNICK—SCOTT'S SATURDAY EXCURSIONS TO ABBOTSFORD—A SUNDAY THERE IN FEBRUARY—CONSTABLE—JOHN BALLANTYNE—THOMAS PURDIE, ETC.—PRINCE GUSTAVUS VASA—PROCLAMATION OF KING GEORGE IV.—PUBLICATION OF THE MONASTERY—1820.

In the course of December, 1819, and January, 1820, Scott drew up three essays, under the title of "The Visionary," upon certain popular doctrines or delusions, the spread of which at this time filled with alarm, not only Tories like him, but many persons who had been distinguished through life for their adherence to political liberalism. These papers appeared successively in James Ballantyne's Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and their parentage being obvious, they excited much attention in Scotland. Scott collected them into a pamphlet, which had also a large circulation; and I remember his showing very particular satisfaction when he observed a mason reading it to his comrades, as they sat at their luncheon, by a new house on Leith Walk. During January, however, his thoughts continued to be chiefly occupied with the details of the proposed corps of Foresters; of which, I believe, it was at last settled, as far as depended on the other gentlemen concerned in it, that he should be the Major. He wrote and spoke on this subject with undiminished zeal, until the whole fell to the ground in consequence of the Government's ultimately declining to take on itself any part of the expense; a refusal which must have been fatal to any such project when the Duke of Buccleuch was a minor. He felt the disappointment keenly; but, in the mean time, the hearty alacrity with which his neighbours of all classes gave in their adhesion, had afforded him much pleasure, and, as regarded his own immediate dependants, served to rivet the bonds of affection and confidence, which were to the end maintained between him and them. Darnick had been especially ardent in the cause, and he thenceforth considered its volunteers as persons whose individual fortunes closely concerned him. I could fill many a page with the letters which he wrote at subsequent periods, with the view of promoting the success of these spirited young fellows in their various departments of industry: they were proud of their patron, as may be supposed, and he was highly gratified, as well as amused, when he learned that,—while the rest of the world were talking of "The Great Unknown,"—his usual *sobriquet* among these villagers was "the Duke of Darnick." Already his possessions almost encircled this picturesque and thriving hamlet; and there were few things on which he had more strongly fixed his fancy than acquiring a sort of symbol of seigniory there, by becoming the purchaser of a certain then ruinous tower that predominated, with a few coeval trees, over the farm-houses and cottages of his *ducal* vassals. A letter, previously quoted, contains an allusion to this Peelhouse of Darnick; which is moreover exactly described in the novel which he had now in hand—the Monastery. The interest Scott seemed to take in the Peel awakened, however, the pride of its hereditary proprietor: and when that worthy person, who had made some money by trade in Edinburgh, resolved on fitting it up for the evening retreat of his own life, *his Grace of Darnick* was too happy to wave his pretensions.

This was a winter of uncommon severity in Scotland; and the snow lay so deep and so long as to interrupt very seriously all Scott's country operations. I find, in his letters to Laidlaw, various paragraphs expressing the concern he took in the hardships which his poor neighbours must be suffering. Thus, on the 19th of January, he says,

"Dear Willie,

"I write by the post that you may receive the enclosed, or rather subjoined, cheque for L.60, in perfect safety. This dreadful morning will probably stop Mercer.[*] It makes me shiver in the midst of superfluous comforts, to think of the distress of others. L.10 of the L.60 I wish you to distribute among our poorer neighbours, so as may best aid them. I mean not only the actually indigent, but those who are, in our phrase, *ill aff.* I am sure Dr Scott[†] will assist you with his advice in this labour of love. I think part of the wood-money,[‡] too, should be given among the Abbotstown folks if the storm keeps them off work, as is like.

Yours truly,
WALTER SCOTT.

"Deep, deep snow lying here. How do the goodwife and bairns? The little bodies will be half buried in snow drift."

---

[*] The weekly Darnick carrier.

[†] Dr Scott of Darnlee.—See *ante*, p. 260. I regret to observe in the newspapers, as this page is passing through the press, the death of this very amiable, modest, and intelligent friend of Sir Walter Scott's.

[‡] Some money expected from the sale of larches.

And again, on the 25th, he writes thus:—

"Dear Willie,

"I have yours with the news of the inundation, which, it seems, has done no damage. I hope *Mai* will be taken care of. He should have a bed in the kitchen, and always be called in doors after it is dark, for all the kind are savage at night. Please cause Swanston to knock him up a box, and fill it with straw from time to time. I enclose a cheque for L.50 to pay accounts, &c. Do not let the poor bodies want for a L.5, or even a L.10, more or less.

'We'll get a blessing wi' the lave,
And never miss't.' *

"Yours, W. S."

In the course of this month, through the kindness of Mr Croker, Scott received from the late Earl Bathurst, then Colonial Secretary of State, the offer of an appointment in the civil service of the East India Company for his second son: and this seemed at the time too good a thing not to be gratefully accepted; though the apparently increasing prosperity of his fortunes induced him, a few years afterwards, to indulge his parental feelings by throwing it up. He thus alludes to this matter in a letter to his good old friend at Jedburgh.

To Robert Shortreed, Esq. Sheriff Substitute of Roxburghshire, Jedburgh.

"Edinburgh, 19th Jan. 1820.

"My Dear Sir,

"I heartily congratulate you on getting the appointment for your son William in a manner so very pleasant to your feelings, and which is, like all Whytbank does, considerate, friendly, and generous.* I am not aware that I have any friends at Calcutta, but if you think letters to Sir John Malcolm and Lieut.-Colonel Russell would serve my young friend, he shall have my best commendations to them.

---

* Burns—*Lines to a Mouse.*

" It is very odd that almost the same thing has happened to me; for about a week ago, I was surprised by a letter, saying, that an unknown friend (who since proves to be Lord Bathurst, whom I never saw or spoke with) would give my second son a writer's situation for India. Charles is two years too young for this appointment; but I do not think I am at liberty to decline an offer so advantageous, if it can be so arranged that, by exchange or otherwise, it can be kept open for him. Ever yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

About the middle of February—it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring,—I accompanied him and part of his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions, Scott appeared at the usual hour in Court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning dress, green jacket and so forth, under the clerk's gown; a license of which many gentlemen of the long robe had been accustomed to avail themselves in the days of his youth—it being then considered as the authentic badge that they were lairds as well as lawyers—but which, to use the dialect of the place, had fallen into *desuetude* before I knew the Parliament House. He was, I think, one of the two or three, or, at most, the half dozen, who still adhered to this privilege of their order; and it has now, in all likelihood, become quite obsolete, like the ancient custom, a part of the same system, for all Scotch barristers to appear without gowns or wigs, and in coloured clothes, when upon circuit. At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Mathieson was sure to be in attendance in the Parliament Close, and five minutes after, the gown had been tossed off, and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. On this occasion, he was, of course, in mourning; but I have thought it worth while to preserve the circumstance of his usual Saturday's costume. As we proceeded, he talked without reserve of the novel of the Monastery, of which he had the first volume with him: and mentioned, what he had probably forgotten when he wrote the Introduction of 1830, that a good deal of that volume had been composed before he concluded Ivanhoe. "It was a relief," he said, "to interlay the scenery most familiar to me with the strange world for which I had to draw so much on imagination."

---

* " An India appointment, with the name blank, which the late Mr Pringle of Whytbank sent unsolicited, believing it might be found useful to a family where there were seven sons to provide for."—*Note, by Mr A. Shortrede.*

Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a shooting or hunting-box a few miles off in the vale of the Leader, and with him Mr Constable, his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the Church service and one of Jeremy Taylor's sermons, we all sallied out, before noon, on a perambulation of his upland territories; Maida and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march. At starting we were joined by the constant henchman, Tom Purdie—and I may save myself the trouble of any attempt to describe his appearance, for his master has given us an inimitably true one in introducing a certain personage of his Redgauntlet:—"He was, perhaps, sixty years old; yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and, though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength and activity; the last somewhat impaired, perhaps, by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance; eyes far sunk under projecting eyebrows, which were grizzled like his hair; a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait." Equip this figure in Scott's cast-off green jacket, white hat, and drab trousers; and imagine that years of kind treatment, comfort, and the honest consequence of a confidential *grieve*, had softened away much of the hardness and harshness originally impressed on the visage by anxious penury and the sinister habits of a *black-fisher*;—and the Tom Purdie of 1820 stands before us.

We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked that "it was not every author who should lead him such a dance." But Purdie's face shone with rapture as he observed how severely the swag-bellied bookseller's activity was tasked. Scott exclaiming exultingly, though perhaps for the tenth time, "This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!"—"You may say that, Sheriff," quoth Tom,—and then lingering a moment for Constable—"My certy," he added, scratching his head, "and I think it will be a grand season for *our buiks* too." But indeed Tom always talked of *our buiks* as if they had been as regular products of the soil as *our aits* and *our birks*. Having threaded, first the Hexilcleugh and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntly Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Weird-Sisters*, as Scott called the Miss Fergusons, reanimated our exhausted Bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little further down the same famous brook. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation, by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law. The details of that plan were soon settled—it was agreed on all hands that a sweeter scene of seclusion could not be fancied. He repeated some verses of Rogers' " Wish," which paint the spot :—

" Mine be a cot beside the hill—
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near : " &c.

But when he came to the Stanza—

" And Lucy at her wheel shall sing,
In russet-gown and apron blue,"

he departed from the text, adding—

" But if Bluestockings here you bring,
The Great Unknown won't dine with you."

Johnny Ballantyne, a projector to the core, was particularly zealous about this embryo establishment. Foreseeing that he should have had walking enough ere he reached Huntly Burn, his dapper little Newmarket groom had been ordered to fetch Old Mortality thither, and now, mounted on his fine hunter, he capered about us, looking pallid and emaciated as a ghost, but as gay and cheerful as ever, and would fain have been permitted to ride over hedge and ditch to mark out the proper line of the future avenue. Scott admonished him that the country people, if they saw him at such work, would take the whole party for heathens; and clapping spurs to his horse, he left us. "The deil's in the body," quoth Tom Purdie, "he'll be ower every *yett* atween this and Turnagain, though it be the Lord's day. I wadna wonder if he were to be *ceeted* before the Session." "Be sure, Tam," cries Constable, "that ye egg on the Dominie to blaw up his father—I would na grudge a hundred miles o' gait to see the ne'er-do-weel on the stool, and neither, I'll be sworn, would the Sheriff."—"Na, na," quoth the Sheriff—"we'll let sleeping dogs be, Tam."

As we walked homeward, Scott, being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his "Sunday poney," as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as with the rest of the party, and Tom put in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment that the Sheriff got his collar in his gripe.

There arose a little dispute between them about what tree or trees ought to be cut down in a hedgerow that we passed, and Scott seemed somewhat ruffled with finding that some previous hints of his on that head had not been attended to. When we got into motion again, his hand was on Constable's shoulder—and Tom dropped a pace or two to the rear, until we approached a gate, when he jumped forward and opened it. "Give us a pinch of your snuff, Tom," quoth the Sheriff—Tom's mull was produced, and the hand resumed its position. I was much diverted with Tom's behaviour when we at length reached Abbotsford. There were some garden chairs on the green in front of the cottage porch. Scott sat down on one of them to enjoy the view of his new tower as it gleamed in the sunset, and Constable and I did the like. Mr Purdie remained lounging near us for a few minutes, and then asked the Sheriff "to speak a word." They withdrew together into the garden—and Scott presently rejoined us with a particularly comical expression of face. As soon as Tom was out of sight, he said —"Will ye guess what he has been saying, now?—Well, this is a great satisfaction! Tom assures me that he has thought the matter over, and *will take my advice* about the thinning of that clump behind Captain Ferguson's."

I must not forget that, whoever might be at Abbotsford, Tom always appeared at his master's elbow on Sunday, when dinner was over, and drank long life to the Laird and the Lady and all the good company, in a quaigh of whisky, or a tumbler of wine, according to his fancy. I believe Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction that, among all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-doors'* servant; but in truth he kept by the old fashion even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did, on the box—with his footman, if he happened to be in the rumble; and when there was any very young lad in the household, he held it a point of duty to see that his employments were so arranged as to leave time for advancing his education, made him bring his copy-book once a-week to the library, and examined him as to all that he was doing. Indeed he did not confine this humanity to his own people. Any steady servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming and going. With all this, Scott was a very rigid enforcer of discipline—contrived to make it thoroughly understood by all about him, that they must do their part by him as he did his by them; and the result was happy. I never knew any man so well served as he was —so carefully, so respectfully, and so silently; and I cannot help doubting if, in any department of human operations, real kindness ever compromised real dignity.

In a letter, already quoted, there occurs some mention of the Prince Gustavus Vasa, who was spending this winter in Edinburgh, and his Royal Highness's accomplished attendant, the Baron Polier. I met them frequently in Castle Street, and remember as especially interesting the first evening that they dined there. The only portrait in Scott's Edinburgh dining room was one of Charles XII. of Sweden, and he was struck, as indeed every one must have been, with the remarkable resemblance which the exiled Prince's air and features presented to the hero of his race. Young Gustavus, on his part, hung with keen and melancholy enthusiasm on Scott's anecdotes of the expedition of Charles Edward Stewart. The Prince, accompanied by Scott and myself, witnessed the ceremonial of the proclamation of King George IV. on the 2d of February at the Cross of Edinburgh, from a window over Mr Constable's shop in the High Street; and on that occasion also the air of sadness, that mixed in his features with eager curiosity, was very affecting. Scott explained all the details to him, not without many lamentations over the barbarity of the Auld Reekie bailies, who had removed the beautiful Gothic Cross itself, for the sake of widening the thoroughfare. The weather was fine, the sun shone bright; and the antique tabards of the heralds, the trumpet notes of *God save the King*, and the hearty cheerings of the immense uncovered multitude that filled the noble old street, produced altogether a scene of great splendour and solemnity. The Royal Exile surveyed it with a flushed cheek and a watery eye, and Scott, observing his emotion, withdrew with me to another window, whispering "poor lad! poor lad! God help him." Later in the season the Prince spent a few days at Abbotsford; but I have said enough to explain some allusions in the following letter to Lord Montagu, in which Scott also adverts to several public events of January and February, 1820—the assassination of the Duke of Berri—the death and funeral of King George III.—the general election which ensued the royal demise—and its more unhappy consequence, the re-agitation of the old disagreement between George IV. and his wife, who, as soon as she learned his accession to the throne, announced her resolution of returning to England from the Continent (where she had been leading for some years a wandering life), and asserting her rights as Queen. The Tory gentleman in whose canvass of the Selkirk boroughs Scott was now earnestly concerned, was his worthy friend, Mr Henry Monteith of Carstairs, who ultimately carried the election.

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c., Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Edinburgh, 22d February, 1820.

" My dear Lord,

" I have nothing to say, except that Selkirk has declared decidedly for Monteith, and that his calling and election seem to be sure. Roxburghshire is right and tight. Harden will not stir for Berwickshire. In short, within my sphere of observation, there is nothing which need make you regret your personal absence; and I hope my dear young namesake and chief will not find his influence abated while he is unable to head it himself. It is but little I can do, but it shall always be done with a good will—and merits no thanks, for I owe much more to his father's memory than ever I can pay a tittle of. I often think what he would have said or wished, and, within my limited sphere, *that* will always be a rule to me while I have the means of advancing in any respect the interest of his son—certainly if any thing could increase this desire, it would be the banner being at present in your Lordship's hand. I can do little but look out a-head, but that is always something. When I look back on the house of Buccleuch, as I once knew it, it is a sad retrospect. But we must look forward, and hope for the young blossom of so goodly a tree. I think your Lordship judged quite right in carrying Walter in his place to the funeral.* He will long remember it, and may survive many occasions of the same kind, to all human appearance. Here is a horrid business of the Duke de Berri. It was first told me yesterday by Count Itterburg (*i. e.* Prince Gustavus of Sweden, son of the ex-King), who comes to see me very often. No fairy tale could match the extravagance of such a tale being told to a private Scotch gentleman by such a narrator, his own grandfather having perished in the same manner. But our age has been one of complete revolution, baffling all argument and expectation. As to the King and Queen, or to use the abbreviation of an old Jacobite of my acquaintance, who, not loving to hear them so called at full length, and yet desirous to have the newspapers read to him, commanded these words always to be pronounced as the letters K. and Q.—I say then, as to the K. and the Q. I venture to think, that which-ever strikes the first blow will lose the battle. The sound, well-judging, and well-principled body of the people will be much shocked at the stirring such a hateful and disgraceful question. If the K. urges it unprovoked, the public feeling will put him in the wrong; if he lets her alone, her own imprudence, and that of her hot-headed adviser Harry Brougham, will push on the discussion; and, take a fool's word for it, as Sancho says, the country will never bear her coming back, foul with the various kinds of infamy she has been stained with, to force herself into the throne. On the whole, it is a discussion most devoutly to be deprecated by those who wish well to the Royal family.

---

* The funeral of George III. at Windsor: the young Duke of Buccleuch was at this time at Eton.

"Now for a very different subject. I have a report that there is found on the farm of Melsington, in a bog, the limb of a bronze figure, full size, with a spur on the heel. This has been reported to Mr Riddell, as Commissioner, and to me as Antiquary in chief, on the estate. I wish your lordship would permit it to be sent provisionally to Abbotsford, and also allow me, if it shall seem really curious, to make search for the rest of the statue. Clarkson* has sent me a curious account of it; and that a Roman statue, for such it seems, of that size should be found in so wild a place, has something very irritating to the curiosity. I do not of course desire to have any thing more than the opportunity of examining the relique. It may be the foundation of a set of bronzes, if stout Lord Walter should turn to *virtu*.

"Always my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The novel of the Monastery was published, by Messrs

---

* Ebenezer Clarkson, Esq., a surgeon of distinguished skill at Selkirk, and through life a trusty friend and crony of the Sheriff's.

Longman and Co., in the beginning of March. It appeared not in the post 8vo form of Ivanhoe, but in 3 vols. 12mo, like the earlier works of the series. In fact, a few sheets of the Monastery had been printed before Scott agreed to let Ivanhoe have "By the Author of Waverley" on its title-page; and the different shapes of the two books belonged to the abortive scheme of passing off "Mr Laurence Templeton" as a hitherto unheard of candidate for literary success.

CHAPTER XII.

SCOTT REVISITS LONDON—HIS PORTRAIT BY LAWRENCE, AND BUST BY CHANTREY—ANECDOTES BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM—LETTERS TO MRS SCOTT—LAIDLAW, ETC.—HIS BARONETCY GAZETTED—MARRIAGE OF HIS DAUGHTER SOPHIA—LETTER TO "THE BARON OF GALASHIELS"—VISIT OF PRINCE GUSTAVUS VASA AT ABBOTSFORD—TENDERS OF HONORARY DEGREES FROM OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE—LETTER TO MR THOMAS SCOTT.

1820.

At the rising of his Court on the 12th of March, Scott proceeded to London, for the purpose of receiving his baronetcy, which he had been prevented from doing in the spring of the preceding year by his own illness, and again at Christmas by accumulated family afflictions. On his arrival in town, his son the Cornet met him; and they both established themselves at Miss Dumergue's.

One of his first visiters was Sir Thomas Lawrence, who informed him that the King had resolved to adorn the great gallery, then in progress at Windsor Castle, with portraits by his hand of his Majesty's most distinguished contemporaries; all the reigning monarchs of Europe, and their chief ministers and generals had already sat for this purpose; on the same walls the King desired to see exhibited those of his own subjects who had attained the highest honours of literature and science—and it was his pleasure that this series should commence with Walter Scott. The portrait was of course begun immediately, and the head was finished before Scott left town. Sir Thomas has caught and fixed with admirable skill one of the loftiest expressions of Scott's countenance at the proudest period of his life: to the perfect truth of the representation every one who ever surprised him in the act of composition at his desk, will bear witness. The expression, however, was one with which many who had seen the man often, were not familiar; and it was extremely unfortunate that Sir Thomas filled in the figure from a separate sketch after he had quitted London. When I first saw the head I thought nothing could be better; but there was an evident change for the worse when the picture appeared in its finished state—for the rest of the person had been done on a different scale, and this neglect of proportion takes considerably from the majestic effect which the head itself, and especially the mighty pile of forehead, had in nature. I hope one day to see a good engraving of the head alone, as I first saw it floating on a dark sea of canvass.

Lawrence told me, several years afterwards, that, in his opinion, the two greatest men he had painted were the Duke of Wellington and Sir Walter Scott; "and it was odd," said he, "that they both chose usually the same hour for sitting—seven in the morning. They were both as patient sitters as I ever had. Scott, however, was, in my case at least, a very difficult subject. I had selected what struck me as his noblest look; but when he was in the chair before me, he talked away on all sorts of subjects in his usual style, so that it cost me great pains to bring him back to solemnity, when I had to attend to any thing beyond the outline of a subordinate feature. I soon found that the surest recipe was to say something that would lead him to recite a bit of poetry. I used to introduce, by hook or by crook, a few lines of Campbell or Byron—he was sure to take up the passage where I left it, or *cap* it by something better—and then—when he was, as Dryden says of one of his heroes—

> 'Made up of three parts fire—so full of Heaven
> It sparkled at his eyes'—

then was my time—and I made the best use I could of it. The hardest day's-work I had with him was once when ******† accompanied him to my painting room. ****** was in particularly gay spirits, and nothing would serve him but keeping both artist and sitter in a perpetual state of merriment by anecdote upon anecdote about poor Sheridan. The anecdotes were mostly in themselves black enough,—but the style of the *conteur* was irresistibly quaint and comical. When Scott came next, he said he was ashamed of himself for laughing so much as he listened to them; 'for truly,' quoth he, 'if the tithe was fact, ****** might have said to Sherry—as Lord Braxfield once said to an eloquent culprit at the bar—'Ye're a vera clever chiel', man, but ye wad be nane the waur o' a hanging.'"

It was also during this visit to London that Scott sat to Mr (now Sir Francis) Chantrey for that bust which alone preserves for posterity the cast of expression most fondly remembered by all who ever mingled in his domestic circle. Chantrey's request that Scott would sit to him was communicated through Mr Allan Cunningham, then (as now) employed as Clerk of the Works in our great Sculptor's establishment. Mr Cunningham, in his early days, when gaining his bread as a stone-mason in Nithsdale, made a pilgrimage on foot into Edinburgh, for the sole purpose of seeing the author of Marmion as he passed along the street. He was now in possession of a celebrity of his own, and had mentioned to his patron his purpose of calling on Scott to thank him for some kind message he had received, through a common friend, on the subject of those "Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song," which first made his poetical talents known to the public. Chantrey embraced this opportunity of conveying to Scott his own long-cherished ambition of modelling his head; and Scott at once assented to the flattering proposal. "It was about nine in the morning," says Mr Cunningham, "that I sent in my card to him at Miss Dumergue's in Piccadilly—it had not been gone a minute when I heard a quick heavy step coming, and in he came, holding out both hands, as was his custom, and saying, as he pressed mine—'Allan Cunningham, I am glad to see you.'" "I said something" (continues Mr C.) "about the pleasure I felt in touching the hand that had charmed me so much. He moved his hand, and with one of his comic smiles, said, 'Ay—and a big brown hand it is.' I was a little abashed at first: Scott saw it and soon put me at my ease; he had the power, I had almost called it the art, but art it was not, of winning one's heart and restoring one's confidence beyond any man I ever met." Then ensued a little conversation, in which Scott complimented Allan on his ballads, and urged him to try some work of more consequence, quoting Burns's words, "for dear auld Scotland's sake;" but being engaged to breakfast in a distant part of the town, he presently dismissed his visiter, promising to appear next day at an early hour, and submit himself to Mr Chantrey's inspection.

---

† A distinguished Whig friend.

Chantrey's purpose had been the same as Lawrence's—to seize a poetical phasis of Scott's countenance; and he proceeded to model the head as looking upwards, gravely and solemnly. The talk that passed, mean time, had equally amused and gratified both, and fortunately, at parting, Chantrey requested that Scott would come and breakfast with him next morning before they recommenced operations in the studio. Scott accepted the invitation, and when he arrived again in Eccle-stone street, found two or three acquaintances assembled to meet him,—among others, his old friend Richard Heber. The breakfast was, as any party in Sir Francis Chantrey's house is sure to be, a gay and joyous one, and not having seen Heber in particular for several years, Scott's spirits were unusually excited by the presence of an intimate associate of his youthful days. I transcribe what follows from Mr Cunningham's Memorandum:—

"Heber made many enquiries about old friends in Edinburgh, and old books and old houses, and reminded the other of their early socialities. 'Ay,' said Mr Scott, 'I remember we once dined out together, and sat so late that when we came away the night and day were so neatly balanced, that we resolved to walk about till sunrise. The moon was not down, however, and we took advantage of her ladyship's lantern and climbed to the top of Arthur's Seat; when we came down we had a rare appetite for breakfast.'—'I remember it well,' said Heber; 'Edinburgh was a wild place in those days,—it abounded in clubs—convivial clubs.'—'Yes,' replied Mr Scott, 'and abounds still; but the conversation is calmer, and there are no such sallies now as might be heard in other times. One club, I remember, was infested with two Kemps, father and son: when the old man had done speaking, the young one began,—and before he grew weary, the father was refreshed and took up the song. John Clerk, during a pause, was called on for a stave; he immediately struck up in a psalm-singing tone, and electrified the club with a verse which sticks like a burr to my memory—

'Now, God Almighty judge James Kemp,
  And likewise his son John,
And hang them over Hell in hemp,
  And burn them in brimstone.'—

"In the midst of the mirth which this specimen of psalmody raised, John (commonly called *Jack*) Fuller, the member for Surrey, and standing jester of the House of Commons, came in. Heber, who was well acquainted with the free and joyous character of that worthy, began to lead him out by relating some festive anecdotes: Fuller growled approbation, and indulged us with some of his odd sallies; things which, he assured us, 'were damned good, and true too, which was better.' Mr Scott, who was standing when Fuller came in, eyed him at first with a look grave and considerate; but as the stream of conversation flowed, his keen eye twinkled brighter and brighter; his stature increased, for he drew himself up, and seemed to take the measure of the hoary joker, body and soul. An hour or two of social chat had meanwhile induced Mr Chantrey to alter his views as to the bust, and when Mr Scott left us, he said to me privately, 'this will never do—I shall never be able to please myself with a perfectly serene expression. I must try his conversational look, take him when about to break out into some sly funny old story.' As Chantrey said this, he took a string, cut off the head of the bust, put it into its present position, touched the eyes and the mouth slightly, and wrought such a transformation upon it, that when Scott came to his third sitting, he smiled, and said, 'Ay, ye're mair like yoursel now!—Why, Mr Chantrey, no witch of old ever performed such cantrips with clay as this.'"

These sittings were seven in number; but when Scott revisited London, a year afterwards, he gave Chantrey several more, the bust being by that time in marble. Allan Cunningham, when he called to bid him farewell, as he was about to leave town on the present occasion, found him in court dress, preparing to kiss hands at the Levee, on being gazetted as Baronet. "He seemed any thing but at his ease," says Cunningham, "in that strange attire; he was like one in armour—the stiff cut of the coat—the large shining buttons and buckles—the lace ruffles—the queue—the sword—and the cocked hat, formed a picture at which I could not forbear smiling. He surveyed himself in the glass for a moment and burst into a hearty laugh. 'O Allan,' he said, 'O Allan, what creatures we must make of ourselves in obedience to Madam Etiquette. 'See'st thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this Fashion is?—how giddily he turns about all the hotbloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty?'" *

Scott's baronetcy was conferred on him, not in consequence of any Ministerial suggestion, but by the King personally, and of his own unsolicited motion; and when the Poet kissed his hand, he said to him—"I shall always reflect with pleasure on Sir Walter Scott's having been the first creation of my reign."

The Gazette announcing his new dignity was dated March 30, and published on the 2d April, 1820; and the Baronet, as soon afterwards as he could get away from Lawrence, set out on his return to the North; for he had such respect for the ancient prejudice (a classical as well as a Scottish one) against marrying in May, that he was anxious to have the ceremony in which his daughter was concerned over before that unlucky month should commence. It is needless to say, that during this stay in London he had again experienced, in its fullest measure, the enthusiasm of all ranks of his acquaintance; and I shall now transcribe a few paragraphs from domestic letters, which will show, among other things, how glad he was when the hour came that restored him to his ordinary course of life.

---

* Much ado about Nothing. Act iii., Scene 3.

To Mrs Scott, 39, Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Piccadilly, 20th March, 1820.

"My dear Charlotte,

"I have got a delightful plan for the addition at Abb——, which, I think, will make it quite complete, and furnish me with a handsome library, and you with a drawingroom and better bedroom, with good bedrooms for company, &c. It will cost me a little hard work to meet the expense, but I have been a good while idle. I hope to leave this town early next week, and shall hasten back with great delight to my own household gods.

"I hope this will find you from under Dr Ross's charge. I expect to see you quite in beauty when I come down, for I assure you I have been coaxed by very pretty ladies here, and look for merry faces at home. My picture comes on, and will be a grand thing, but the sitting is a great bore. Chantrey's bust is one of the finest things he ever did. It is quite the fashion to go to see it—there's for you. Yours, my dearest love, with the most sincere affection,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"March 27, Piccadilly.

"My dear Charlotte,

"I have the pleasure to say that Lord Sidmouth has promised to dismiss me in all my honours by the 30th, so that I can easily be with you by the end of April; and you and Sophia may easily select the 28th, 29th, or 30th, for the ceremony. I have been much fêted here, as usual, and had a very quiet dinner at Mr Arbuthnot's yesterday with the Duke of Wellington, where Walter heard the great Lord in all his glory talk of war and Waterloo. Here is a hellish—yes, literally a hellish bustle. My head turns round with it. The whole mob of the Middlesex blackguards pass through Piccadilly twice a day, and almost drive me mad with their noise and vociferation.* Pray do, my dear Charlotte, write soon. You know those at a distance are always anxious to hear from home. I beg you to say what would give you pleasure that I could bring from this place, and whether you want any thing from Mrs Arthur for yourself, Sophia, or Anne; also what would please little Charles. You know you may stretch a point on this occasion. Richardson says your honours will be Gazetted on Saturday; certainly very soon, as the King, I believe, has signed the warrant. When, or how I shall see him, is not determined, but I suppose I shall have to go to Brighton. My best love attends the girls, little Charles, and all the quadrupeds.

"I conclude that the marriage will take place in Castle Street, and want to know where they go, &c. All this you will have to settle without my wise head; but I shall be terribly critical—so see you do all right. I am always, dearest Charlotte, most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

("For the Lady Scott of Abbotsford—to be.")

To Mr James Ballantyne, Printer, St John Street, Edinburgh.

"28th March, 96, Piccadilly.

"Dear James,

"I am much obliged by your attentive letter. Unquestionably Longman and Co. sell their books at subscription price, because they have the first of the market, and only one-third of the books; so that, as they say with us, 'let them 'care that come ahint.'

---

* The general election was going on.

This I knew and foresaw, and the ragings of the booksellers, considerably aggravated by the displeasure of Constable and his house, are ridiculous enough; and as to their injuring the work, if it have a principle of locomotion in it, they cannot stop it—if it has not, they cannot make it move. I care not a bent twopence about their quarrels; only I say now, as I always said, that Constable's management is best, both for himself and the author; and, had we not been controlled by the narrowness of discount, I would put nothing past him. I agree with the public in thinking the work not very interesting; but it was written with as much care as the others—that is, with no care at all; and,

> 'If it is na weil bobbit we'll bobb it again.'

"On these points I am Atlas. I cannot write much in this bustle of engagements, with Sir Francis's mob hollowing under the windows. I find that even this light composition demands a certain degree of silence, and I might as well live in a cotton-mill. Lord Sidmouth tells me I will obtain leave to quit London by the 30th, which will be delightful news, for I find I cannot bear late hours and great society so well as formerly; and yet it is a fine thing to hear politics talked of by Ministers of State, and war discussed by the Duke of Wellington.

"My occasions here will require that John or you send me two notes payable at Coutts' for L.300 each, at two and three months' date. I will write to Constable for one at L.350, which will settle my affairs here—which, with fees and other matters, come, as you may think, pretty heavy. Let the bills be drawn payable at Coutts', and sent without delay. I will receive them safe if sent under Mr Freeling's cover. Mention particularly what you are doing, for now is your time to push miscellaneous work. Pray take great notice of inaccuracies in the

Novels. They are very very many—some mine, I dare say—but all such as you may and ought to correct. If you would call on William Erskine (who is your well-wisher, and a little mortified he never sees you), he would point out some of them.

" Do you ever see Lockhart ? You should consult him on every doubt where you would refer to me if present. Yours very truly. W. S.

" You say nothing of John, yet I am anxious about him."

To Mr Laidlaw, Kaeside, Melrose.

" London, April 2, 1820.

" Dear Willie,

" I had the great pleasure of your letter, which carries me back to my own braes, which I love so dearly, out of this place of bustle and politics. When I can see my Master—and thank him for many acts of favour—I think I will bid adieu to London for ever; for neither the hours nor the society suit me so well as a few years since. There is too much necessity for exertion, too much brilliancy and excitation from morning till night.

" I am glad the sheep are away, though at a loss. I should think the weather rather too dry for planting, judging by what we have here. Do not let Tom go on sticking in plants to no purpose—better put in firs in a rainy week in August. Give my service to him. I expect to be at Edinburgh in the end of this month, and to get a week at Abbotsford before the Session sits down. I think you are right to be in no hurry to let Broomielees. There seems no complaint of wanting money here just now, so I hope things will come round. —Ever yours, truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Miss Scott, Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"London, April 3, 1820.

"Dear Sophia,

"I have no letter from any one at home excepting Lockhart, and he only says you are all well; and I trust it is so. I have seen most of my old friends, who are a little the worse for the wear, like myself. A five years' march down the wrong side of the hill tells more than ten on the right side. Our good friends here are kind as kind can be, and no frumps. They lecture the Cornet a little, which he takes with becoming deference and good humour. There is a certain veil of Flanders lace floating in the wind for a certain occasion, from a certain godmother, but that is more than a dead secret.

"We had a very merry day yesterday at Lord Melville's, where we found Lord Huntly* and other friends, and had a bumper to the new Baronet, whose name was Gazetted that evening. Lady Huntly plays Scotch tunes like a Highland angel. She ran a set of variations on 'Kenmure's on and awa',' which I told her were enough to raise a whole country-side. I never in my life heard such fire thrown into that sort of music. I am now laying anchors to windward, as John Ferguson says, to get Walter's leave extended. We saw the D. of York, who was very civil, but wants altogether the courtesy of the King. I have had a very gracious message from the King. He is expected up very soon, so I don't go to Brighton, which is so far good. I fear his health is not strong. Mean while all goes forward for the Coronation. The expense of the robes for the peers may amount to L.400 a-piece. All the ermine is bought up at the most extravagant prices. I hear so much of it, that I really think, like Beau Tibbs, I shall be tempted to come up and see it, if possible. Indeed, I don't see why I should not stay here, as I seem to be forgotten at home. The people here are like to smother me with kindness, so why should I be in a great hurry to leave them?

---

* The late Duke of Gordon.

"I write, wishing to know what I could bring Anne and you and mamma down that would be acceptable; and I shall be much obliged to you to put me up to that matter. To little Charles also I promised something, and I wish to know what he would like. I hope he pays attention to Mr Thompson, to whom remember my best compliments. I hope to get something for him soon.

"To-day I go to spend my Sabbath quietly with Joanna Baillie and John Richardson, at Hampstead. The long Cornet goes with me. I have kept him amongst the seniors—nevertheless he seems pretty well amused. He is certainly one of the best-conditioned lads I ever saw, in point of temper.

"I understand you and Anne have gone through the ceremony of confirmation. Pray, write immediately, and let me know how you are all going on, and what you would like to have, all of you. You know how much I would like to please you. Yours, most affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

While Scott remained in London, the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh became vacant by the death of Dr Thomas Brown; and among others who proposed themselves as candidates to fill it was the author of the Isle of Palms. He was opposed in the Town Council (who are the patrons of most of the Edinburgh chairs), on various pretences, but solely, in fact, on party grounds, certain humorous political pieces having much exacerbated the Whigs of the North against him; and I therefore wrote to Scott, requesting him to animate the Tory Ministers in his behalf. Sir Walter did so, and Mr Wilson's canvass was successful. The answer to my communication was in these terms:—

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq. Great King Street, Edinburgh.

"London, 30th March, 1820.

"Dear Lockhart,

"I have yours of the Sunday morning, which has been terribly long of coming. There needed no apology for mentioning any thing in which I could be of service to Wilson; and, so far as good words and good wishes *here* can do, I think he will be successful; but the battle must be fought in Edinburgh. You are aware that the only point of exception to Wilson may be, that, with the fire of genius, he has possessed some of its eccentricities;—but, did he ever approach to those of Henry Brougham, who is the god of Whiggish idolatry? If the high and rare qualities with which he is invested are to be thrown aside as useless, because they may be clouded by a few grains of dust which he can blow aside at pleasure, it is less a punishment on Mr Wilson than on the country. I have little doubt he would consider success in this weighty matter as a pledge for binding down his acute and powerful mind to more regular labour than circumstances have hitherto required of him; for indeed, without doing so, the appointment could in no point of view answer his purpose. He must stretch to the oar for his own credit as well as that of his friends; and if he does so there can be no doubt that his efforts will be doubly blessed, in reference both to himself and to public utility. He must make every friend he can amongst the council. Palladio Johnstone should not be omitted. If my wife canvasses him, she may do some good.*

---

* Mr Robert Johnston, a grocer on a large scale on the North

"You must, of course, recommend to Wilson great temper in his canvass—for wrath will do no good. After all, he must leave off sack, purge, and live cleanly as a gentleman ought to do; otherwise people will compare his present ambition to that of Sir Terry O'Fag when he wished to become a judge. 'Our pleasant follies are made the whips to scourge us,' as Lear says; for otherwise what could possibly stand in the way of his nomination? I trust it will take place, and give him the consistence and steadiness which are all he wants to make him the first man of the age.

"I am very angry with Castle Street—Not a soul has written me, save yourself, since I came to London. Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Sir Walter, accompanied by the Cornet, reached Edinburgh late in April, and on the 29th of that month he gave me the hand of his daughter Sophia. The wedding, *more Scotico*, took place in the evening; and, adhering on all such occasions to ancient modes of observance with the same punctiliousness which he mentions as distinguishing his worthy father, he gave a jolly supper afterwards to all the friends and connexions of the young couple.

His excursions to Tweedside during Term-time were, with very rare exceptions, of the sort which I have described in the preceding chapter; but he departed from

---

Bridge of Edinburgh, and long one of the leading Bailies, was about this time the prominent patron of some architectural novelties in Auld Reekie, which had found no favour with Scott;—hence his prænomen of *Palladio*—which he owed, I believe, to a song in Blackwood's Magazine. The good Bailie had been at the High School with Sir Walter, and their friendly intercourse was never interrupted but by death.

his rule about this time, in honour of the Swedish Prince, who had expressed a wish to see Abbotsford before leaving Scotland, and assembled a number of his friends and neighbours to meet his Royal Highness. Of the invitations which he distributed on this occasion I insert one specimen—that addressed to Mr Scott of Gala.

"*To the Baron of Galashiels*

"*The Knight of Abbotsford sends greeting.*

"Trusty and well beloved—Whereas Gustavus, Prince Royal of Sweden, proposeth to honour our poor house of Abbotsford with his presence on Thursday next, and to repose himself there for certain days, we do heartily pray you, out of the love and kindness which is and shall abide betwixt us, to be aiding to us at this conjuncture, and to repair to Abbotsford with your lady, either upon Thursday or Friday, as may best suit your convenience and pleasure, looking for no denial at your hands. Which loving countenance we will, with all thankfulness, return to you at your mansion of Gala. The hour of appearance being five o'clock, we request you to be then and there present, as you love the honour of the name; and so advance banners in the name of God and St Andrew.

WALTER SCOTT."

Given at Edinburgh,
20th May, 1820."

The visit of Count Itterburg is alluded to in this letter to the Cornet, who had now rejoined his regiment in Ireland. It appears that on reaching headquarters he had found a charger *hors de combat.*

To Walter Scott, Esq., 18*th Hussars, Cork.*

"Castle Street, May 31, 1820.

"Dear Walter,

"I enclose the cheque for the allowance; pray take care to get good notes in exchange. You had better speak to the gentleman whom Lord Shannon introduced you to, for, when banks take a-breaking, it seldom stops with the first who go. I am very sorry for your loss. You must be economical for a while, and bring yourself round again, for at this moment I cannot so well assist as I will do by and by. So do not buy any thing but what you *need.*

"I was at Abbotsford for three days last week, to receive Count Itterburg, who seemed very happy while with us, and was much affected when he took his leave. I am sorry for him—his situation is a very particular one, and his feelings appear to be of the kindest order. When he took leave of me, he presented me with a beautiful seal, with all our new blazonries cut on a fine amethyst; and what I thought the prettiest part, on one side of the setting is cut my name, on the other the Prince's—*Gustaf.* He is to travel through Ireland, and will probably be at Cork. You will, of course, ask the Count and Baron to mess, and offer all civilities in your power, in which, I dare say, Colonel Murray will readily join. They intend to enquire after you.

"I have bought the land adjoining to the Burnfoot cottage, so that we now march with the Duke of Buccleuch all the way round that course. It cost me L.2300—but there is a great deal of valuable fir planting, which you may remember; fine roosting for the black game. Still I think it is L.200 too dear, but Mr Laidlaw thinks it can be made worth the money, and it rounds the property off very handsomely. You cannot but remember the ground; it lies under the Eildon, east of the Charge-law.

"Mamma, Anne, and Charles are all well. Sophia has been complaining of a return of her old sprain. I told her Lockhart would return her on our hands as not being sound wind and limb.

"I beg you to look at your French, and have it much at heart that you should study German. Believe me, always affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In May, 1820, Scott received from both the English Universities the highest compliment which it was in their power to offer him. The Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge communicated to him, in the same week, their request that he would attend at the approaching Commemorations, and accept the honorary degree of Doctor in Civil Law. It was impossible for him to leave Scotland again that season; and on various subsequent renewals of the same flattering proposition from either body, he was prevented, by similar circumstances, from availing himself of their distinguished kindness.

In the course of a few months Scott's family arrangements had undergone, as we have seen, considerable alteration. Meanwhile he continued anxious to be allowed to adopt, as it were, the only son of his brother Thomas; and the letter, in consequence of which that hopeful youth was at last committed to his charge, contains so much matter likely to interest parents and guardians, that, though long, I cannot curtail it.

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Paymaster 70th Regiment.

"Abbotsford, 23d July, 1820.

"My dear Tom,

"Your letter of May, this day received, made me truly happy, being the first I have received from you since our dear mother's death, and the consequent breaches which fate has made in our family. My own health continues quite firm, at no greater sacrifice than bidding adieu to our old and faithful friend John Barleycorn, whose life-blood has become a little too heavy for my stomach. I wrote to you from London concerning the very handsome manner in which the King behaved to me in conferring my *petit titre*, and also of Sophia's intended marriage, which took place in the end of April, as we intended. I got Walter's leave prolonged, that he might be present, and I assure you that, when he attended at the ceremony in full regimentals, you have scarce seen a handsomer young man. He is about six feet and an inch, and perfectly well made. Lockhart seems to be every thing I could wish, and as they have enough to live easily upon for the present, and good expectations for the future, life opens well with them. They are to spend their vacations in a nice little cottage, in a glen belonging to this property, with a rivulet in front, and a grove of trees on the east side to keep away the cold wind. It is about two miles distant from this house, and a very pleasant walk reaches to it through my plantations, which now occupy several hundred acres. Thus there will be space enough betwixt the old man of letters and the young one. Charles's destination to India is adjourned till he reaches the proper age—it seems he cannot hold a writership until he is sixteen years old, and then is admitted to study for two years at Hertford College.

"After my own sons, my most earnest and anxious wish will be, of course, for yours,—and with this view I have pondered well what you say on the subject of your Walter; and whatever line of life you may design him for, it is scarce possible but that I can be of considerable use to him. Before fixing, however, on a point so very important, I would have you consult the nature of the boy himself. I do not mean by this that you should ask his opinion, because at so early an age a well bred up child naturally takes up what is suggested to him by his parents; but I think you should consider, with as much impartiality as a parent can, his temper, disposition, and qualities of mind and body. It is not enough that you think there is an opening for him in one profession rather than another,—for it were better to sacrifice the fairest prospects of that kind than to put a boy into a line of life for which he is not calculated. If my nephew is steady, cautious, fond of a sedentary life and quiet pursuits, and at the same time a proficient in arithmetic, and with a disposition towards the prosecution of its highest branches, he cannot follow a better line than that of an accountant. It is highly respectable—and is one in which, with attention and skill, aided by such opportunities as I may be able to procure for him, he must ultimately succeed. I say ultimately, because the harvest is small and the labourers numerous in this as in other branches of our legal practice; and whoever is to dedicate himself to them, must look for a long and laborious tract of attention ere he reaches the reward of his labours. If I live, however, I will do all I can for him, and see him put under a proper person, taking his 'prentice fee, &c., upon myself. But if, which may possibly be the case, the lad has a decided turn for active life and adventure, is high-spirited, and impatient of long and dry labour, with some of those feelings not unlikely to result from having lived all his life in a camp or a barrack, do not deceive yourself, my dear brother—you will never make him an accountant; you will never be able to convert such a sword into a pruning-hook, merely because you think a pruning-hook the better thing of the two. In this supposed case your authority and my recommendation might put him into an accountant's office; but it would be just to waste the earlier years of his life in idleness, with all the temptations to dissipation which idleness gives way to; and what sort of a place a writing chamber is you cannot but remember. So years might wear away, and at last the youth starts off from his profession, and becomes an adventurer too late in life, and with the disadvantage, perhaps, of offended friends and advanced age standing in the way of his future prospects.

"This is what I have judged fittest in my own family, for Walter would have gone to the bar had I liked, but I was sensible (with no small reluctance did I admit the conviction) that I should only spoil an excellent soldier to make a poor and undistinguished gownsman. On the same principle I shall send Charles to India, not, God knows, with my will, for there is little chance of my living to see him return; but merely that, judging by his disposition, I think the voyage of his life might be otherwise lost in shallows. He has excellent parts, but they are better calculated for intercourse with the world than for hard and patient study. Having thus sent one son abroad from my family, and being about to send off the other in due time, you will not, I am sure, think that I can mean disregard to your parental feelings in stating what I can do for your Walter. Should his temper and character incline for active life, I think I can promise to get him a cadetship in the East India Company's service; so soon as he has had the necessary education, I will be at the expense of his equipment and passage-money; and when he reaches India, there he is completely provided, secure of a competence if he lives, and with great chance of a fortune if he thrives. I am aware this would be a hard pull at Mrs Scott's feelings and yours; but recollect your fortune is small, and the demands on it numerous, and pagodas and rupees are no bad things. I can get Walter the first introductions, and if he behaves himself as becomes your son, and my nephew, I have friends enough in India, and of the highest class, to ensure his success, even his rapid success—always supposing my recommendations to be seconded by his own conduct. If, therefore, the youth has any thing of your own spirit, for God's sake do not condemn him to a drudgery which he will never submit to—and remember, to sacrifice his fortune to your fondness will be sadly mistaken affection. As matters stand, unhappily you must be separated; and considering the advantages of India, the mere circumstance of distance is completely counterbalanced. Health is what will naturally occur to Mrs Scott; but the climate of India is now well understood, and those who attend to ordinary precaution live as healthy as in Britain. And so I have said my say. Most heartily will I do my best in any way you may ultimately decide for; and as the decision really ought to turn on the boy's temper and disposition, you must be a better judge by far than any one else. But if he should resemble his father and uncle in certain indolent habits, I fear he will make a better subject for an animating life of enterprise than for the technical labour of an accountant's desk. There is no occasion, fortunately, for forming any hasty resolution. When you send him here I will do all that is in my power to stand in the place of a father to him, and you may fully rely on my care and tenderness. If he should ultimately stay at Edinburgh, as both my own boys leave me, I am sure I shall have great pleasure in having the nearest in blood after them with me. Pray send him as soon as you can, for at his age, and under imperfect opportunities of education, he must have a good deal to make up. I wish I could be of the same use to you which I am sure I can be to your son.

"Of public news I have little to send. The papers will tell you the issue of the Radical row for the present. The yeomanry behaved most gallantly. There is in Edinburgh a squadron as fine as ours was, all young men, and zealous soldiers. They made the western campaign with the greatest spirit, and had some hard and fatiguing duty, long night-marches, surprises of the enemy, and so forth, but no fight, for the whole Radical plot went to the devil when it came to gun and sword. Scarce any blood was shed, except in a trifling skirmish at Bonnymuir, near Carron. The rebels were behind a wall, and fired on ten hussars and as many yeomen—the latter under command of a son of James Davidson, W.S. The cavalry cleared the wall, and made them prisoners to a man. The commission of Oyer and Terminer is now busy trying them and others. The Edinburgh young men showed great spirit; all took arms, and my daughters say (I was in London at the time), that not a feasible-looking beau was to be had for love or money. Several were like old Beardie; they would not shave their moustaches till the Radicals were put down, and returned with most awful whiskers. Lockhart is one of the cavalry, and a very good troop. It is high to hear these young fellows talk of the Raid of Airdrie, the trot of Kilmarnock, and so on, like so many moss-troopers. The Queen is making an awful bustle, and though by all accounts her conduct has been most abandoned and beastly, she has got the whole mob for her partisans, who call her injured innocence, and what not. She has courage enough to dare the worst, and a most decided desire to be revenged of *him*, which, by the way, can scarce be wondered at. If she had as many followers of high as of low degree (in proportion), and funds to equip them, I should not be surprised to see her fat bottom in a pair of buckskins, and at the head of an army—God mend all. The things said of her are beyond all usual profligacy. Nobody of any fashion visits her. I think myself monstrously well clear of London and its intrigues, when I look round my green fields, and recollect I have little to do, but to

———‘ make my grass mow,
And my apple tree grow.’

“ I beg my kind love to Mrs Huxley. I have a very acceptable letter from her, and I trust to retain the place she promises me in her remembrance. Sophia will be happy to hear from uncle Tom, when Uncle Tom has so much leisure. My best compliments attend your wife and daughters, not forgetting Major Huxley and Walter. My dear Tom, it will be a happy moment when circumstances shall permit us a meeting on this side Jordan, as Tabitha says, to talk over old stories, and lay new plans. So many things have fallen out which I had set my heart upon strongly, that I trust this may happen amongst others.—Believe me, yours very affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.”

END OF VOLUME FOURTH.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO., PAUL'S WORK.